



# World Masterpieces



Maynard Mack, *General Editor*

YALE UNIVERSITY

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YALE UNIVERSITY

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Kenneth Douglas

YALE UNIVERSITY

VOLUME

1

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## Preface



*World Masterpieces* is an anthology of Western literature, based on principles which we believe to be sound, but which have not always been sufficiently observed, we feel, in the existing anthologies in this field.

We have sought to make the range of readings in this collection unusually wide and varied. Its contents reach in time from Genesis and the *Iliad* to *Murder in the Cathedral*, and the literatures represented include English, Irish, American, Russian, German, Scandinavian, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Latin, Hebrew, and Greek. The literatures of the Far East have been omitted, on the ground that the principal aim of a course in world literature is to bring American students into living contact with their own Western tradition, and that this aim cannot be adequately realized in a single course if they must also be introduced to a very different tradition, one requiring extended treatment to be correctly understood. Twentieth-century literature has been represented with particular fullness, because we feel that it is important for students to grasp the continuity of literature.

*World Masterpieces* is predominantly an anthology of imaginative literature. We have not tried to cover the entire history of the West in print, and have avoided filling our pages with philosophy, political theory, theology, historiography, and the like. This principle was adopted not because we disapprove of coming at the history of an epoch by way of literature, but because imaginative literature, in our view, itself best defines the character of its epoch: great monuments of art, we would be inclined to say, furnish the best documents for history. They lead us deeper into the meaning of a past age than other modes of writing do, because they convey its unformulated aspirations and intuitions as well as its conscious theorems and ideals; and yet, being timeless, they have also an unmatched appeal to our own age. For this reason, we have admitted into *World Masterpieces* only works which have something important to say to modern readers, and we have made it a point to interpret them with reference not only to their time but to ours.

Teacher and student will find here a number of selections which they have not encountered before in a text of this kind.

We are convinced that effective understanding of any author depends upon studying an autonomous and substantial piece of his work: a whole drama, a whole story, at least a whole canto or book of a long poem. Our anthology therefore contains no snippets. Where it has been necessary to represent a long work by extracts, they are large extracts, forming a coherent whole. These considerations have also affected our treatment of lyric poems. Experience leads us to the conclusion that lyric poetry cannot be taught with full success in translation, and that very short poems, in whatever language, are nearly useless in a survey of these dimensions. We have accordingly excluded almost all *short* lyrics, and, with rare exceptions, all lyric poetry in foreign languages. We have preferred to represent the romantic movement, in which the lyric becomes a dominant form, with selections in English from the major English and American poets. This is not a flawless solution to the problem, but it seems to us better than printing many pages of inferior translations.

Since nothing has so deterred students from enjoying the great masterpieces of the classical and modern foreign languages as translations in an English idiom that is no longer alive, we have done our best to use translations which show a feeling for the English language as it is written and spoken today. Thus we offer here, with some pride, Richmond Lattimore's *Iliad*; Louis MacNeice's *Agamemnon* and his *Faust*; William Butler Yeats's *King Oedipus*; Rex Warner's *Medea*; C. Day Lewis' *Aeneid*; Lawrence Binyon's *Divine Comedy*; Samuel Putnam's *Don Quixote*; and many other renderings of equal quality.

Our introductions—in consonance with the scheme of the book—emphasize criticism rather than history. While providing all that seems to us necessary in the way of historical background (and supplying biographical summaries in the appendix following each introduction), we aim to give the student primarily a critical and analytical discussion of the works themselves. We try to suggest what these works have to say to us today, and why they should be valued now. In every instance, we seek to go beneath the usual generalizations about periods and philosophies, and to focus on men and books.

Our annotations of the texts are, we believe, exceptionally full and helpful. In a number of cases, these texts are annotated in this anthology for the first time. In one instance, we have been able to supply for a work the best-known notes on it in English, those of C. H. Grandgent to the *Divine Comedy*. Every care has been

taken to furnish accurate and generous bibliographies as a guide to further reading.

In sum, we have sought to compile a new anthology, a text new in every sense—new in its emphasis on imaginative literature, on major authors, on wholes and large excerpts, on modern translations, on critical rather than historical treatment of texts, and, pervasively, on the tastes and values of our own time.

The Editors





World  
Masterpieces

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VOLUME 1

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# Masterpieces of the Ancient World

EDITED BY

BERNARD M. W. KNOX

*Associate Professor of Classics, Yale University*



This section represents, not the ancient world as a whole, but the most significant area and period of ancient man's development. The area is the Mediterranean basin, and the period the twelve hundred years from, roughly, 800 B.C. to 400 A.D. In this place and time ancient man laid the intellectual and religious foundations of the modern Western outlook.

The literature of the ancient world, which, whether or not we are acquainted with it, is still the background of our institutions, attitudes, and thought, was written in three languages—Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The peoples who spoke these languages developed their civilizations independently in place and time, but the development of the Mediterranean area into one economic and political unit brought these civilizations into contact with each other and

produced a fusion of their typical attitudes which is the basis of all subsequent Western thought. This process of independent development, interaction, and final fusion is represented in the arrangement of the section; in the latter part of it the three separate lines converge, and they finally meet in the figure of St. Augustine, who had the intellectual honesty and curiosity of the Greek at his best, the social seriousness and sense of order of the Roman, and the Hebrew's feeling of man's inadequacy and God's omnipotent justice.

## PALESTINE

The territory of the Hebrews was of no particular strategic importance, and their record is not that of an imperial people. In their period of independence, from their beginnings as a pastoral tribe to their high point as a kingdom with a splendid cap-

## 2 • *The Ancient World*

ital in Jerusalem, they accomplished little of note in the political or military spheres; their later history was a bitter and unsuccessful struggle for freedom against a series of foreign masters—Babylonian, Greek, and Roman. They left no painting or sculpture behind them, no drama, no epic poetry. What they did leave is a religious literature, probably written down between the eighth and second centuries B.C., which is informed by an attitude different from that of all the peoples surrounding them, a conception of divine power and of the government of the universe so simple that to us, who have inherited it from them, it seems obvious, yet in its time so revolutionary that it made them a nation apart, sometimes laughed at, sometimes feared, but always alien.

### THE CREATION

The typical attitudes of the Hebrews appear in the story which they told of the creation of the world and of man. This creation is the work of one God, who is omnipotent and omniscient, and who creates a perfect and harmonious order. The disorder which we see all around us, physical and moral, is not God's creation but Adam's; it is the consequence of man's disobedience. The story not only reconciles the undeniable existence of evil and disorder in the world with the conception of God's infinite justice, it also attributes to man himself an independence of God, free will, which in this case he has used for evil. The Hebrew God is not limited in His power by other

deities, who oppose His will (as in the Greek stories of Zeus and his undisciplined family); His power over inanimate nature is infinite; in all the range of His creation there is only one being able to resist Him—man.

Since God is all-powerful, even this resistance on Adam's part is in some mysterious way a manifestation of God's will; how this can be is not explained by the story, and we are left with the mystery that still eludes us, the coexistence of God's prescient power and man's unrestricted free will.

The story of the Fall of Man ends with a situation in which Adam has earned for himself and his descendants a short life of sorrow relieved only by death. It was the achievement of later Hebrew teachers to carry the story on and develop a concept of a God who is as merciful as He is just, who watches tenderly over the destinies of the creatures who have rebelled against Him, and brings about the possibility of atonement and full reconciliation. Man must eventually atone for Adam's act; human guilt must be wiped out by sacrifice. The development of this idea was extended over centuries of thought and suffering; it reached its highest expression in the figure of Christ, the Son of God, who as a man pays the full measure due in human suffering and human death. Before this event, the idea of the one who suffers for all was a major theme in Hebrew literature; not only did there emerge slowly a concept of the Hebrews as a chosen nation which suffers for the rest, but individual figures

of Hebrew history and imagination embodied this theme in the form of the story of the suffering servant whose suffering brings relief to his fellow men and ultimate glory to himself. This is the idea behind the story of Joseph.

#### JOSEPH

Joseph, his father's favorite son, has a sense of his own great destiny, confirmed by his dreams, which represent him as the first of all his race. He is indeed to be the first, but to become so he must also be the last. He is sold into slavery by his brothers; the savior is rejected by those whom he is to save, as the Hebrews were rejected by their neighbors and as they rejected their own prophets.

With the loss of his liberty, Joseph's trials have only begun. In Egypt, after making a new and successful life for himself, he is thrown into prison on a false accusation. He interprets the dream of Pharaoh's butler, who promises, if his interpretation is correct, to secure his release; the butler is restored to freedom and royal favor, but, as is the way of the world, forgets his promise and leaves his comforter in jail. Joseph stays in prison two more years but finally obtains his freedom and becomes Pharaoh's most trusted adviser. When his brothers come from starving Palestine and bow down before him asking for help, he saves them; not only does he give them grain but he also provides a home for his people in Egypt. "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt," he says to them when he reveals his identity. ". . .

God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance."

One of the essential points of this story, and the whole conception of the suffering servant, is the distinction which it emphasizes between an external, secular standard of good and a spiritual, religious standard. In the eyes of the average man, prosperity and righteousness are connected, if not identified; he tends to think of the sufferer as one whose misfortune must be explained as a punishment for his wickedness. This feeling is strong in ancient (especially in Greek) literature, but modern man should not be unduly complacent about his superiority to the ancients in this respect, for the attitude is still with us. It is in fact a basic assumption of the competitive society—the view, seldom expressed but strongly rooted, that the plight of the unfortunate is the result of their own laziness, the wealth of the rich the reward of superior virtue.

The writer of the Joseph story sees in the unfortunate sufferer the savior who is the instrument of God's will; it is because of what he suffers that the sun and the moon and the eleven stars will bow down to Joseph. Yet the story does not emphasize the sufferings of Joseph; he is pictured rather as the man of action who through native ability and divine protection turns the injuries done him into advantages. We are not made to feel the torment in his soul; when he weeps it is because of the memory of what he has suffered and

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his yearning for his youngest brother, and he is in full control of the situation. And his reward in the things of this world is great. Not only does he reveal himself as the savior of his nation, but he becomes rich and powerful beyond his brothers' dreams, and in a greater kingdom. The spiritual and secular standards are at the end of the story combined; Joseph's suffering is neatly balanced by his worldly reward.

### JOB

Later Hebrew writers developed a sadder and profounder view. The greatest literary masterpiece of the Old Testament, the Book of Job, is also concerned with the inadequacy of worldly standards of happiness and righteousness, but the suffering of Job is so overwhelming and so magnificently expressed that even with our knowledge of its purpose and its meaning it seems excessive. Joseph suffered slavery, exile, and imprisonment, but turned them all to account; Job loses his family and wealth in a series of calamities which strike one on the other like hammer blows and is then plagued with a loathsome disease. Unlike Joseph, he is old; he cannot adapt himself and rise above adverse circumstances, and he no longer wishes to live. Except for one thing. He wishes to understand the reason for his suffering.

For his friends the explanation is simple. With the blindness of men who know no standards other than those of this world, they are sure that Job's misfortune must be the result of

some wickedness on his part. But Job is confident in his righteousness; his torture is as much mental as physical; he cannot reconcile the fact of his innocence with the calamities that have come upon him with all the decisive suddenness of the hand of God.

The full explanation is never given to him, but it is given to the reader in the two opening chapters of the book. This prologue to the dramatic section of the work gives us the knowledge which is hidden from the participants in the ensuing dialogue; the writer uses the method characteristic of Greek tragedy—irony, the deeper understanding of the dramatic spoken word which is based on the superior knowledge of the audience. The prologue explains God's motive in allowing Job to suffer. It is an important one; God intends to use Job as a demonstration to His skeptical subordinate, Satan, of the fact that a human being can retain faith in God's justice in the face of the greatest imaginable suffering. This motive, which Job does not know and which is never revealed to him, gives to the dialogue between Job and his friends its suspense and its importance; God has rested His case, that humanity is capable of keeping faith in divine justice against all appearances to the contrary, on this one man.

The arguments of Job's friends are based on the worldly equation, success = virtue. They attempt to undermine Job's faith, not in God, but in himself. ". . . who ever perished, being

innocent?" asks Eliphaz, "or where were the righteous cut off?" Job's misfortune is a proof that he must have sinned; all he has to do is to admit his guilt and ask God for pardon, which he will surely receive. He refuses to accept this easy way out, and we know that he is right. In fact, we know from the prologue that he has been selected for misfortune not because he has sinned, but precisely because of his outstanding virtue. ". . . there is none like him in the earth," God says, "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil." What Job must do is to persevere not only in his faith in God's justice but also in the conviction of his own innocence. He must believe the illogical, accept a paradox. His friends are offering him an easy way out, one which seems to be the way of humility and submission. But it is a false way. And God finally tells them so. ". . . the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath."

Job's confidence in his own righteousness is not pride, but intellectual honesty. He sees that the problem is much harder than his friends imagine; to let them persuade him of his own guilt would lighten his mental burden by answering the question which tortures him, but his intelligence will not let him yield. Like Oedipus, he refuses to stop short of the truth; he even uses the same words:

" . . . let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will." He finally expresses his understanding and acceptance of the paradox involved in the combination of his suffering with his innocence, but he does so with a human independence and dignity. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him." He sums up his case with a detailed account of the righteousness of his ways, and it is clear that this account is addressed not only to his three friends but also to God. ". . . my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me," he says. His friends are silenced by the majesty and firmness of his statement, they "ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes," but God is moved to reply.

The magnificent poetry of that reply, the voice out of the whirlwind, still does not give Job the full explanation, God's motive in putting him to the torture. It is a triumphant proclamation of God's power and also of His justice, and it silences Job, who accepts it as a sufficient answer. That God does not reveal the key to the riddle even to the man who has victoriously stood the test and vindicated His faith in humanity is perhaps the most significant point in the poem. It suggests that there is not and never will be an explanation of human suffering that man's intelligence can comprehend. The sufferer must, like Job, cling to his faith in himself and in God; he must accept the inexplicable fact that his own

undeserved suffering is the working of God's justice.

#### THE SUFFERING SERVANT

In the end Job, like Joseph, has it all made up to him. His suffering is greater than Joseph's, and it is clear that the writer of the Book of Job shows, alike in the speeches and in the ironic framework of the whole, a profounder understanding of the nature and meaning of suffering than the narrator of the story of Joseph, but like Joseph, Job lives to see the end of his troubles and has his material reward. ". . . the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. . . . After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations." But the theme of the sufferer was to be carried further than this; the Hebrew prophets speak mysteriously of a suffering for which there is no recompense in this life, which ends only in death. In this deeper vision there is no reconciliation between the standards of this world and the standards of the higher authority behind the suffering.

In the Song of the Suffering Servant, which is included in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, we are given a vision of one who is to save Israel and the world. He is not well-favored like Joseph: ". . . he hath no form nor comeliness." Nor is he, like Job, "the greatest of all the men of the east"; he is "despised and rejected of men." He suffers for his fellow men: ". . . the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." His suffering knows no limit but death; he is oppressed and afflicted, imprisoned and ex-

ecuted. ". . . he was cut off out of the land of the living" and "he made his grave with the wicked."

The circumstances described here are familiar from other cultures than the Hebrew; they are found in the primitive ritual of many peoples, and ceremonial relics of them still existed in civilized fifth-century Athens. In certain primitive societies, to rid the group of guilt a scapegoat was chosen, who was declared responsible for the misdeeds of all, and who was then mocked, beaten, driven out of the community, and killed. The scapegoat was hated and despised as the embodiment of the guilt of the whole community; his death was the most ignominious imaginable. The memory of some such primitive ritual is unmistakable in the Hebrew song; but its meaning has been utterly changed. It is precisely in the figure of the hated and suffering scapegoat that the Hebrew prophet sees the savior of mankind—an innocent sufferer, "he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth"—and he sees this without visible confirmation; there is no recognition by the brothers, no vindication by a voice out of the whirlwind. It is the highest expression of the Hebrew vision at its saddest and most profound, this portrayal of the savior who comes not in pomp and power but in suffering and meekness, who dies rejected and despised, and who atones for human sin and makes "intercession for the transgressors." It implies the complete rejection of all worldly standards, a rejection which is to be



made explicit later in the words of Christ, the embodiment of the suffering servant: "No man can serve two masters: . . . God and mammon."

## GREECE

### HOMER

Greek literature begins with two masterpieces, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which cannot be accurately dated (the conjectural dates range over three centuries), and which are attributed to a poet, Homer, about whom nothing is known except his name. They may have been composed before the art of writing was in general use in Greece; it is certain that they were intended not for reading, but for oral recitation. Until quite recently it was generally believed that the poems as we now have them were an amalgam of the work of many different minstrels, composing at different times and in different places, adopting and adapting the lines of their predecessors while adding their own; much of the Homeric criticism of the nineteenth century was an attempt to distinguish the early material from the late according to the canons of linguistics, history, and archaeology. But the poetic organization of each of the two epics, the subtle interrelationship of the parts which creates their structural and emotional unity, is now for most critics ample assurance that these poems owe their present form to the shaping hand of a single poet, the architect who selected from the enormous wealth of the oral tradition and fused what he took with original material to create

the two magnificently ordered poems known as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Of these two the *Iliad* is perhaps the earlier; it is generally agreed that it is the greater poem. Its subject is war; its characters are men in battle and women whose fate depends on the outcome. The war is fought by the Achaeans against the Trojans for the recovery of Helen, the wife of the Achaean chieftain Menelaus; the combatants are heroes who in their chariots engage in individual duels before the supporting lines of infantry and archers. This romantic war aim and the outmoded military technique suggest to the modern reader a comparison with chivalrous engagements between medieval knights—a vision of individual prowess in combat which the nostalgia of our mechanized age contrasts sentimentally with the mass slaughter of modern war. But there is no sentimentality in Homer's description of battle. "Patroclus went up to him and drove a spear into his right jaw; he thus hooked him by the teeth and the spear pulled him over the rim of his car. As one who sits at the end of some jutting rock and draws a strong fish out of the sea with a hook and line—even so with his spear did he pull Thetor all gaping from his chariot; he threw him down on his face and he died while falling." This is meticulously accurate; there is no attempt to suppress the ugliness of Thetor's death. The bare, careful description creates the true nightmare quality of battle, in which men perform monstrous

actions with the same matter-of-fact efficiency they display in their normal occupations; and the simile reproduces the grotesque appearance of violent death—the simple spear thrust takes away Thestor's dignity as a human being even before it takes his life. He is gaping, like a fish on the hook.

The simile does something else too. The comparison of Patroclus to an angler emphasizes another aspect of battle, its excitement. Homer's lines here combine two contrary emotions, the human revulsion from the horror of violent death and the human attraction to the excitement of violent action. This passage is typical of the poem as a whole. Everywhere in it we are conscious of these two poles, of war's ugly brutality and its "terrible beauty." The poet accepts violence as a basic factor in human life, and accepts it without sentimentality; for it is equally sentimental to pretend that war is not ugly and to pretend that it does not have its beauty. Three thousand years have not changed the human condition in this respect; we are still both lovers and victims of the will to violence, and as long as we are, Homer will be read as its greatest interpreter.

The *Iliad* describes the events of a few weeks in the ten-year siege of Troy. The particular subject of the poem, as its first line announces, is the anger of Achilles, the bravest of the Achaean chieftains encamped outside the city. Achilles is a man who lives by and for violence, who is creative and alive only in violent action. He knows

that he will be killed if he stays before Troy, but rather than decay, as he would decay, in peace, he accepts that certainty. His inadequacy for peace is shown by the fact that even in war the violence of his temper makes him a man apart and alone. His anger cuts him off from his commander and his fellow princes; to spite them he withdraws from the fighting, the only context in which his life has any meaning. He is brought back into it at last by the death of his one real friend, Patroclus; the consequences of his wrath and withdrawal fall heavily on the Achaeans, but most heavily on himself.

The great champion of the Trojans, Hector, fights bravely, but reluctantly; war, for him, is a necessary evil, and he regrets the peaceful past, though he has little hope of peace to come. His pre-eminence in peace is emphasized by the tenderness of his relations with his wife and child and also by his kindness to Helen, the cause of the war which he knows in his heart will bring his city to destruction. We see Hector always against the background of the patterns of civilized life—the rich city with its temples and palaces, the continuity of the family; Achilles' background is the discord of the armed camp on the shore, his loneliness, and his certainty of early death. The duel between these two men is the inevitable crisis of the poem, and just as inevitable is Hector's defeat and death. For against Achilles in his native element of violence nothing can stand.

At the climactic moment of

Hector's death, as everywhere in the poem, Homer's firm control of his material preserves the balance in which our contrary emotions are held; pity for Hector does not entirely rob us of sympathy for Achilles. His brutal words to the dying Hector and the insults he inflicts on his corpse are the mark of the savage, but we are never allowed to forget that this inflexible hatred is the expression of his love for Patroclus. And the final book of the poem shows us an Achilles whose iron heart is moved at last; he is touched by the sight of Hector's father clasping in supplication the terrible hands that have killed so many of his sons. He remembers that he has a father, and that he will never see him again; Achilles and Priam, the slayer and the father of the slain, weep together:

. . . the two remembered, as  
 Priam sat huddled  
 at the feet of Achilleus and wept  
 close for manslaughtering  
 Hektor  
 and Achilleus wept now for his  
 own father, now again  
 for Patroklos.\*

Achilles gives Hector's body to Priam for honorable burial. His anger has run its full course and been appeased; it has brought death, first to the Achaeans and then to the Trojans, to Patroclus and to Hector, and so to Achilles himself, for his death is fated to come "soon after Hektor's." The violence to which he is dedicated will finally destroy him too.

This tragic action is the center of the poem, but it is surrounded by scenes which remind us that the organized destruction of war, though an integral part of human life, is only a part of it. Except for Achilles, whose worship of violence falters only in the final moment of pity for his enemy's father and his own, the yearning for peace and its creative possibilities is never far below the surface. This is most poignantly expressed by the scenes which take place in Troy, especially the farewell between Hector and Andromache; but it is made clear that the Achaeans too are conscious of what they have sacrificed. Early in the poem, when Agamemnon, the Achacan commander, tests the morale of his troops by suggesting that the war be abandoned, they rush for the ships so eagerly and with such heartfelt relief that their commanders are hard put to it to stop them. These two poles of the human condition, war and peace, with their corresponding aspects of human nature, the destructive and the creative, are implicit in every situation and statement of the poem, and they are put before us, in symbolic form, on the shield which the god Hephaestus makes for Achilles. Its emblem is an image of human life as a whole. Here are two cities, one at peace and one at war. In one a marriage is celebrated and a quarrel settled by process of law; the other is besieged by a hostile army and fights for its existence. Scenes of violence—

\* The translator has transliterated the original Greek names, rather than use the more familiar Latin forms. Thus we

find "Patroklos" rather than "Patroclus," "Achilleus" instead of "Achilles," and so on.

peaceful shepherds slaughtered in an ambush, Death dragging away a corpse by its foot—are balanced by scenes of plowing, harvesting, work in the vineyard and on the pasture, a green on which youths and maidens dance. And around the outermost rim of the shield runs “the great strength of the Ocean River,” a river which is at once the frontier of the known and the imagined world and the barrier between the quick and the dead. The shield of Achilles is the total background for the tragic violence of the central figures; it provides a frame which gives the wrath of Achilles and the death of Hector their just proportion and true significance.

The Homeric poems played in the subsequent development of Greek civilization the same rôle that the Old Testament writings had played in Palestine; they became the basis of an education and therefore of a whole culture. Not only did the great characters of the epic serve as models of conduct for later generations of Greeks, but the figures of the Olympian gods retained, in the prayers, poems, and sculpture of the succeeding centuries, the shapes and attributes set down by Homer. The difference between the Greek and the Hebrew hero, between Achilles and Joseph, for example, is remarkable, but the difference between “the God of Abraham and of Isaac” and the Olympians who interfere capriciously in the lives of Hector and Achilles is an unbridgeable chasm. The two conceptions of the power which governs the universe are irreconcilable; and

in fact the struggle between them ended, not in synthesis, but in the complete victory of the one and the disappearance of the other. The Greek conception of the nature of the gods and of their relation to man is so alien to us that it is difficult for the modern reader to take it seriously; the Hebrew basis of European Christianity has made it almost impossible for us to imagine a god who can be feared and laughed at, blamed and admired, and still sincerely worshiped. Yet all these are proper attitudes toward the gods on Olympus; they are all implicit in Homer’s poem.

The Hebrew conception of God is clearly an expression of an emphasis on those aspects of the universe which imply a harmonious order; the elements of disorder in the universe are, in the story of Creation, blamed on man, and in all Hebrew literature the evidences of disorder are something the writer tries to reconcile with an *a priori* assumption of an all-powerful, just God—he never tampers with the fundamental datum. Just as clearly, the Greeks conceived their gods as an expression of the disorder of the world in which they lived; the Olympian gods, like the natural forces of sea and sky, follow their own will even to the extreme of conflict with each other, and always with a sublime disregard for the human beings who may be affected by the results of their actions. It is true that they are all subjects of a single more powerful god, Zeus, but his authority over them is based only on superior strength; though he cannot

be openly resisted, he can be temporarily deceived (as he is, in comic circumstances, in the fourteenth book of the *Iliad*). And Zeus, although in virtue of his superior power his will is finally accomplished in the matter of Achilles' wrath, knows limits to his power too; he cannot save the life of his son, the Lycian hero Sarpedon. Behind Zeus stands the mysterious power of Fate, to which even he must bow.

Such gods as these, representing as they do the blind forces of the universe which man cannot control, are not thought of as connected with morality. Morality is a human creation, and though the gods may approve of it, they are not bound by it. And violent as they are, they cannot feel the ultimate consequence of violence; death is a human fear, just as the courage to face it is a human quality. There is a double standard, one for gods, one for men, and the inevitable consequence is that our real admiration and sympathy is directed not toward the gods, but toward the men. With Hector, and even with Achilles at his worst, we can sympathize; but the gods, though they may excite terror or laughter, can never have our sympathy; we could as easily sympathize with the blizzard or the force of gravity. Homer imposed on Greek literature the anthropocentric emphasis which is its distinguishing mark and its great contribution to the Western mind; though the gods are ever-present characters in the incidents of his poem, his true concern, first and last, is with men.

#### THE CITY-STATE—ATHENS

In the centuries which followed the composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* there grew up in Greece a civilization based on the existence of many small independent cities. The geography of the Greek peninsula encouraged such division, and the division produced a multitude of different constitutions, customs, and dialects, which fostered a spirit of independence and competition. By the beginning of the fifth century B.C. the two most prominent of these city-states were Athens and Sparta; these two cities led the combined Greek resistance to the Persian invasion of Europe in the years 490 to 479 B.C. The defeat of the solid Persian power by the divided and insignificant Greek cities surprised the world and inspired in Greece, and particularly in Athens, a confidence that knew no bounds. Athens was at this time a democracy, the first in Western history. It was a direct, not a representative, democracy, for the citizen body was small enough to permit the exercise of power by a meeting of the citizens in assembly. Athens' power lay in the fleet with which she had played her decisive part in the struggle against Persia, and with this fleet she rapidly became the leader of a naval alliance which included most of the islands of the Aegean Sea and many Greek cities on the coast of Asia Minor. Sparta, on the other hand, was a totalitarian state, rigidly conservative in government and policy, in which the individual citizen was reared and trained by the state for the state's busi-

ness, war. The Spartan land army was consequently superior to any other in Greece, and the Spartans controlled, by direct rule or by alliance, the majority of the city-states of the Peloponnese.

These two cities, allies for the war of liberation against Persia, became enemies when the external danger was eliminated. The middle years of the fifth century were disturbed by indecisive hostilities between them and haunted by the probability of full-scale war to come; as the years went by this war came to be accepted as "inevitable" by both sides, and in 431 B.C. it began. It was to end in 404 B.C. with the total defeat of Athens.

Before the beginning of this disastrous war, Athenian democracy provided its citizens with a cultural and political environment which was without precedent in the ancient world. The institutions of Athens encouraged the maximum development of the individual's capacities and at the same time inspired the maximum devotion to the interests of the community. It was a moment in history of delicate and precarious balance between the freedom of the individual and the demands of the state; and its uniqueness was emphasized by the complete lack of balance in Sparta, where the necessities of the state annihilated the individual as a creative and independent being. It was the proud boast of the Athenians that without sacrificing the cultural amenities of civilized life they could yet when called upon surpass in policy and war their adversary, whose citizen

body was an army in constant training. The Athenians were, in this respect as in others, a nation of amateurs. "... the individual Athenian," said Pericles in the speech which is at once the panegyric of Athenian democracy and its epitaph, "in his own person seems to have the power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace." But the freedom of the individual did not, in Athens' great days, produce anarchy. "While we are . . . unconstrained in our private intercourse," Pericles had observed earlier in his speech, "a spirit of reverence pervades our public acts."

This balance of individual freedom and communal unity was not destined to outlast the century. It went down, with Athens, in the war. The process of disintegration, and the forces behind it, are described and analyzed in the tragic pages of the Athenian historian of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides. With an apparent dispassionateness which increases the somber effect of his writing, he shows how his countrymen, under the mounting pressure of the long conflict, lost the "spirit of reverence" which Pericles saw as the stabilizing factor in Athenian democracy; they subordinated all considerations to the immediate interest of the city and surpassed their enemy in the logical ferocity of their actions; they finally fell victims to leaders who carried the process one step further and subordinated all considerations to their own private interest. The most

brilliant and dangerous of these new statesmen, Alcibiades, carried his personal freedom to the point of betraying his own city in her critical hour. His career is symptomatic of the decay of the freedom in unity described in Pericles' speech; by the end of the fifth century Athens was divided internally as well as defeated externally. The individual citizen no longer thought of himself and Athens as one and the same; the balance was gone forever.

While it lasted, it provided an atmosphere for the artist which has rarely, if ever, existed since. The dramatic poet, whose play was performed at a religious festival attended by most of the citizen body, addressed an audience which consisted of quick-thinking and keenly critical minds which were yet culturally and politically homogeneous; he spoke to the whole city, at a city festival, and in the city's name. Shakespeare had to please the groundlings as well as the court wits, but the Athenian dramatist speaks with the same emphasis and in the same tone to the entire audience.

#### THE DRAMA

European drama begins in Athens in the fifth century B.C. Its origins are shrouded in obscurity into which the researches of many scholars, especially those who have drawn on comparative anthropology, have brought a certain amount of light, though what has been illuminated is the general nature of the development rather than

any particular aspects of it. What no one has explained (and it is perhaps inexplicable) is why the religious dances which are to be found in practically all primitive cultures, gave rise in Greece, and in Greece alone, to what we know as tragedy and comedy.

By the fifth century both tragedy and comedy were regularly produced at the winter festivals of the god Dionysus in Athens. Comedy, like tragedy, employed a chorus, that is to say, a group of dancers (who also sang) and actors, who wore masks; its tone was burlesque and parodic, though there was often a serious theme emphasized by the crude clowning and the free play of wit. The only comic poet of the fifth century whose work has survived is Aristophanes; in his thirteen extant comedies, produced over the years 425-388 B.C., the institutions and personalities of his time are caricatured and criticized in a brilliant combination of poetry and obscenity, of farce and wit, which has no parallel in European literature—it can be described only in terms of itself, by the adjective "Aristophanic."\*

#### TRAGEDY—AESCHYLUS

Tragedy too developed from the dance and song of a chorus performing on a circular dancing floor. An actor, whose medium was speech, not song, and who performed outside the circle, was introduced by some unknown innovator (his name was probably Thespis), and as the number of

\* Aristophanes is not represented in this volume, because the topical nature of his material, the complication of his

puns, and the extreme obscenity of much of his humor make adequate translation next to impossible.

actors was increased to two and then to three, the spoken part of the performance grew in importance. In the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, produced in 458 B.C., an equilibrium between the two elements of the performance has been established; the actors, with their speeches, create the dramatic situation and its movement, the plot; the chorus, while contributing to dramatic suspense and illusion, ranges free of the immediate situation in its odes, which extend and amplify the significance of the action.

The *Agamemnon* is the first play of a trilogy; that is, it was followed at its performance by two more plays, the *Choephoroe* and the *Eumenides*, which carried on its story and its theme to a conclusion. The theme of the trilogy is justice; and its story, like that of almost all Greek tragedies, is a legend which was already well-known to the audience which saw the first performance of the play. This particular legend, the story of the house of Atreus, was rich in dramatic potential, for it deals with a series of retributive murders which stained the hands of three generations of a royal family, and it has also a larger, a social and historical, significance, of which Aeschylus took full advantage. The legend preserves the memory of an important historical process through which the Greeks had passed, the transition from tribal institutions of justice to communal justice, from a tradition which demanded that a murdered man's next of kin avenge his death, to a system requiring settlement of the private quarrel by the court

of law, the typical institution of the city-state which replaced the primitive tribe. When Agamemnon returns victorious from Troy, he is killed by his wife, Clytemnestra, and her lover, Aegisthus, who is Agamemnon's cousin. Clytemnestra kills her husband to avenge her daughter Iphigenia, whom Agamemnon sacrificed to the goddess Artemis when he had to choose between his daughter's life and his ambition to conquer Troy. Aegisthus avenges the crime of a previous generation, the hideous murder of his brothers by Agamemnon's father, Atreus. The killing of Agamemnon is, by the standards of the old system, justice; but it is the nature of this justice that the process can never be arrested; one act of violence must give rise to another; Agamemnon's murder must be avenged too, as it is in the second play of the trilogy by Orestes, his son, who kills both Aegisthus and his own mother, Clytemnestra. Orestes has acted justly according to the code of tribal society based on blood relationship, but in doing so he has violated the most sacred blood relationship of all, the bond between mother and son. The old system of justice has produced an insoluble dilemma; it can be surmounted only by the institution of a new system, and this is accomplished in the final play of the trilogy, in which a court of law is set up by the goddess Athene to try the case of Orestes. He is acquitted, but more important than the decision is the nature of the body which makes it. This is the end of an old era and the beginning of a new. The



existence of the court is a guarantee that the tragic series of events which drove Orestes to the murder of his mother will never be repeated. The system of communal justice, which allows consideration of circumstance and motive, and which punishes impersonally, has at last replaced the inconclusive anarchy of individual revenge.

But the play is concerned with much more than the history of human institutions, with more even than the general problem of violence between man and man for which the particular instances of the trilogy stand. It is also a religious statement. The whole sequence of events, stretching over many generations, is presented as the working out of the will of Zeus. The tragic action of the *Iliad* was also the expression of the will of Zeus (though it is characteristic of Homer that Achilles was at least equally responsible), but for Aeschylus the will of Zeus means something new. In this trilogy the working out of Zeus's will proceeds intricately through three generations of bloodshed to the creation of a human institution which will prevent any repetition of the cycle of murder which produced it. Agamemnon dies, and Clytemnestra dies in her turn, and Orestes is hounded over land and sea to his trial, but out of all this suffering comes an important advance in human understanding and civilization. The chorus of the *Agamemnon*, celebrating the power of Zeus, tells how he

. . . setting us on the road  
Made this a valid law—

"That men must learn by  
suffering."

From the suffering comes wisdom, whereas in the *Iliad* nothing at all comes out of the suffering, except the certainty of more. ". . . far from the land of my fathers," says Achilles to Priam, "I sit here in Troy, and bring nothing but sorrow to you and your children"; but his last words to Priam are a reminder that this interval of sympathy is only temporary. After Hector's burial the war will go on as before. This is Zeus's will; Homer does not attempt to explain it. But the Aeschylean trilogy is nothing less than an attempt to justify the ways of God to man; the suffering is shown to us as the fulfillment of a purpose we can understand, a purpose beneficent to man.

The full scope of Zeus's will is apparent only to the audience, which follows the pattern of its execution through the three plays of the trilogy; as in the *Book of Job*, the characters who act and suffer are in the dark. They claim a knowledge of Zeus's will and boast that their actions are its fulfillment (it is in these terms that Agamemnon speaks of the sack of Troy, and Clytemnestra of Agamemnon's murder), and they are, of course, in one sense, right. But their knowledge is limited; Agamemnon does not realize that Zeus's will includes his death at the hands of Clytemnestra, nor Clytemnestra that it demands her death at the hands of her son. The chorus has, at times, a deeper understanding; in its opening ode it announces the

law of Zeus, that men must learn by suffering, and at the end it recognizes the responsibility of Zeus in the death of Agamemnon—"Brought by Zeus, by Zeus, / Cause and worker of all." But the chorus cannot interpret the event in any way it can accept, for it can see no further than the immediate present; its knowledge of Zeus's law is an abstraction which it cannot relate to the terrible fact.

In this murky atmosphere (made all the more terrible by the beacon fire of the opening lines, which brings not light, but deeper darkness), one human being sees clear; she possesses the concrete vision of the future which complements the chorus's abstract knowledge of the law. This is the prophet Cassandra, Priam's daughter, brought from Troy as Agamemnon's share of the spoils. She has been given the power of true prophecy by the god Apollo, but the gift is nullified by the condition that her prophecies will never be believed. Like the Hebrew prophets, she sees reality—past, present, and future—so clearly that she is cut off from ordinary human beings by the clarity of her vision and the terrible burden of her knowledge; like them she expresses herself in poetic figures, and like them she is rejected by her hearers. To the everyday world, represented by the chorus, she appears to be mad, the fate of prophets in all ages; and it is only as she goes into the palace to the death she foresees that the old men of the chorus begin to accept, fearfully and hesitantly, the truth which she has

been telling them.

The great scene in which she mouths her hysterical prophecies at them delays the action for which everything has been prepared—the death of Agamemnon. Before we hear his famous cry off stage, Cassandra presents us with a mysterious vision in which she combines cause, effect, and result: the murders which have led to this terrible moment, the death of Agamemnon (which will not take place until she leaves the stage), and the murders which will follow. We do not see Agamemnon's death—we see much more. The past, present, and future of Clytemnestra's action and Agamemnon's suffering are fused into a timeless unity in Cassandra's great lines, an unearthly unity which is dissolved only when Agamemnon, in the real world of time and space, screams in mortal agony.

The tremendous statement of the trilogy is made in a style which for magnificence and richness of suggestion can be compared only with the style of Shakespeare at the height of his poetic power, the Shakespeare of *King Lear* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. The language of the *Agamemnon* is an oriental carpet of imagery in which combinations of metaphor, which at first seem bombastic in their violence, take their place in the ordered pattern of the poem as a whole. An image, once introduced, recurs, and reappears again, to run its course verbally and visually through the whole length of the trilogy, richer in meaning with each fresh appearance. In the second choral ode,

for example, the chorus, welcoming the news of Agamemnon's victory at Troy, sings of the net which Zeus and Night threw over the city, trapping the inhabitants like animals. The net is here an image of Zeus's justice, a retributive justice, since Troy is paying for the crime of taking Helen, and the image identifies Zeus's justice with Agamemnon's action in sacking the city. This image occurs again, with a different emphasis, in the hypocritical speech of welcome which Clytemnestra makes to her husband on his return. She tells how she feared for his safety at Troy, how she trembled at the rumors of his death:

. . . If Agamemnon  
Had had so many wounds as  
those reported . . .  
Then he would be gashed fuller  
than a net has holes!

This vision of Agamemnon dead she speaks of as her fear, but we know that it represents her deepest desire, and more, the purpose which she is now preparing to execute. When, later, she stands in triumph over her husband's corpse, she uses the same image to describe the robe which she threw over his limbs to blind and baffle him before she stabbed him—"Inextricable like a net for fishes / I cast about him a vicious wealth of raiment"—and this time the image materializes into an object visible on stage. We can see the net, the gashed robe still folded round Agamemnon's body. We shall see it again, for in the second play Orestes, standing over his mother's body as she now stands over his

father's, will display the robe before us, with its holes and bloodstains, as a justification for what he has just done. Elsewhere in the *Agamemnon* the chorus compares Cassandra to a wild animal caught in the net, and later Aegisthus exults to see Agamemnon's body lying "in the nets of Justice." For each speaker the image has a different meaning, but not one realizes the terrible sense in which it applies to them all. They are all caught in the net, the system of justice by vengeance which only binds tighter the more its captives struggle to free themselves. Clytemnestra attempts to escape, to arrest the process of the chain of murders and the working out of the will of Zeus. "I am ready to make a contract / With the Evil Genius of the House of Atreus," she says, but Agamemnon's body and the net she threw over him are there on the stage to remind us that her appeal will not be heard; one more generation must act and suffer before the net will vanish, never to be seen again.

#### THE INTELLECTUAL REVOLUTION OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

Aeschylus belonged to the generation which fought at Marathon; his manhood and his old age were passed in the heroic period of the Persian defeat on Greek soil and the war which Athens fought to liberate her kinsmen in the islands of the Aegean and on the Asiatic coast. Sophocles, his younger contemporary, lived to see an Athens which had advanced in power and prosperity far beyond the city which Aeschylus knew, but it was an Athens in which

it became clearer every year that something had gone wrong. The league of free Greek cities against Persia which Athens had led to victory in the Aegean had become an empire, in which Athens taxed and coerced the subject cities which had once been her allies; and inside the city a new and dangerous spirit was abroad. Democratic institutions had created a demand for an education which would prepare men for public life, especially by training them in the art of public speaking, and the demand was met by the appearance of the professional teacher, the Sophist, as he was called, who taught, for a handsome fee, not only the techniques of public speaking but also the subjects which gave a man something to talk about—government, ethics, literary criticism, even astronomy. The curriculum of the Sophists, in fact, marks the first appearance in European civilization of the liberal education, just as they themselves were the first professors.

The Sophists were great teachers, but like most teachers they had little or no control over the results of their teaching. Their methods, with an inevitable emphasis on effective presentation of a point of view, to the detriment, and if necessary the exclusion, of anything which might make it less convincing, produced a generation which had been trained to see both sides of any question and to argue the weaker side as effectively as the stronger, the false as effectively as the true; to argue inferentially from probability in the absence of concrete evidence; to appeal

to the audience's sense of its own advantage rather than to accepted moral standards; and to justify individual defiance of general prejudice and even of law by the distinction between "nature" and "convention." These methods dominated the thinking of the Athenians of the last half of the century. The emphasis on the technique of effective presentation of both sides of any case encouraged a relativistic point of view and finally produced a cynical mood which denied the existence of any absolute standards. The canon of probability (which implies an appeal to human reason as the supreme authority), became a critical weapon for an attack on myth and on traditional conceptions of the gods; it had its constructive aspect too, for it is the basis of Thucydides' magnificent guesswork about early Greek history. The appeal to the self-interest of the audience, to expediency, became the method of new political leaders and the fundamental doctrine of a new school of political theory; this theory, and its practice, stripped to their terrifying essentials, are set down as an example to future ages in Thucydides' account of the negotiations between Athens and Melos. The distinction between "nature" and "convention" is the source of the doctrine of the superman, who breaks free of the conventional restraints of society and acts according to the law of his own "nature," as Alcibiades did when he betrayed his country in the Peloponnesian War. The new spirit in Athens has magnificent achievements to its credit, but it

brought disaster. At its roots was a supreme confidence in the human intelligence and a secular view of man's position in the universe that is best expressed in the statement of Protagoras, the most famous of the Sophists: "Man is the measure of all things."

#### TRAGEDY—SOPHOCLES

It was in this atmosphere of critical re-evaluation of accepted standards that Sophocles produced his masterpiece, *King Oedipus*, probably performed for the first time in the opening years of the Peloponnesian War, which began in 431 B.C. This tragedy of a man of high principles and probing intelligence who follows the prompting of that intelligence to the final consequence of true self-knowledge, which makes him put out his eyes, was as full of significance for Sophocles' contemporaries as it is for us. Unlike a modern dramatist, Sophocles used for his tragedy a story well known to the audience and as old as their own history, a legend told by father to son, handed down from generation to generation because of its implicit wealth of meaning, learned in childhood and rooted deep in the consciousness of every member of the community. Such a story the Greeks called a *myth*, and the use of it presented Sophocles, as it did Aeschylus in his trilogy, with material which, apart from its great inherent dramatic potential, already possessed the significance and authority which the modern dramatist must create for himself. It had the authority of history, for the history of ages which leave no records is

myth—that is to say, the significant event of the past, stripped of irrelevancies and imaginatively shaped by the oral tradition. It had a religious authority, for the Oedipus story, like the story of the house of Atreus, is concerned with the relation between man and god. Lastly, and this is especially true of the Oedipus myth, it had the power, because of its subject matter, to arouse the irrational hopes and fears which lie deep and secret in the human consciousness.

The use of the familiar myth enabled the dramatist to draw on all its wealth of unformulated meaning, but it did not prevent him from striking a contemporary note. Oedipus, in Sophocles' play, is at one and the same time the mysterious figure of the past who broke the most fundamental human taboos and a typical fifth-century Athenian. His character contains all the virtues for which the Athenians were famous and the vices for which they were notorious. The best commentary on Oedipus' character is the speech which Thucydides put into the mouth of the Corinthian spokesman at Sparta, a hostile but admiring assessment of the Athenian genius. "Athenians . . . [are] equally quick in the conception and in the execution of every new plan . . ."—so Oedipus has already sent to Delphi when the priest advises him to do so, and has already sent for Tiresias when the chorus suggests this course of action. "They are bold beyond their strength; they run risks which prudence would condemn . . ."—as Oedipus risked his life to answer the

riddle of the Sphinx and later, in spite of the oracle about his marriage, accepted the hand of the queen. ". . . in the midst of misfortune they are full of hope. . . ."—so Oedipus, when he is told that he is not the son of Polybus and Merope, and Jocasta has already realized whose son he is, claims that he is the "child of Good Luck." "When they do not carry out an intention which they have formed, they seem to have sustained a personal bereavement . . ."—so Oedipus, shamed by Jocasta and the chorus into sparing Creon's life, yields sullenly and petulantly.

The Athenian devotion to the city, which received the main emphasis in Pericles' praise of Athens, is strong in Oedipus; his answer to the priest at the beginning of the play shows that he is a conscientious and patriotic ruler. His sudden unreasoning rage is the characteristic fault of Athenian democracy, which in 406 B.C., to give only one instance, condemned and executed the generals who had failed, in the stress of weather and battle, to pick up the drowned bodies of their own men killed in the naval engagement at Arginusae. Oedipus is like the fifth-century Athenian most of all in his confidence in the human intelligence, especially his own; this confidence takes him in the play through the whole cycle of the critical, rationalist movement of the century, from the piety and orthodoxy he displays in the opening scene, through his taunts at oracles when he hears that Polybus is dead, to the

despairing courage with which he accepts the consequences when he sees the abyss opening at his feet. "I am on the edge of dreadful words," says the herdsman from whom he is dragging the truth. "And I of hearing," Oedipus replies, "yet hear I must." And hear he does. He learns that the oracle he had first fought against and then laughed at has been fulfilled; that every step his intelligence prompted was one step nearer to disaster; that his knowledge was ignorance, his clear vision blindness. Faced with the reality which his determined probing finally reveals, he puts out his eyes.

The relation of Oedipus' character to the development of the action is the basis of the most famous attempt to define the nature of the tragic process, Aristotle's theory that pity and terror are aroused most effectively by the spectacle of a man who is "not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty. He must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous—a personage like Oedipus . . ." Other references by Aristotle to this play make it clear that this influential critical canon is based particularly on Sophocles' masterpiece, and the canon has been universally applied to the play. But the great influence (and validity) of the Aristotelian theory should not be allowed to obscure the fact that Sophocles' *King Oedipus* is more highly organized and economical than Aristotle implies. The fact that the critics have differed

about the nature of Oedipus' error or frailty (his errors are many and his frailties include anger, impiety, and self-confidence) is a clue to the real situation. Oedipus falls not through "some vicious mole of nature" or some "particular fault," but because he is the man he is, because of all aspects of his character, good and bad alike. "How can I, being the man I am, being King Oedipus, do other than all I know?" he says in his opening speech; and the development of the action right through to the catastrophe shows us every aspect of his character at work in the process of self-revelation and self-destruction. His first decision in the play, to hear Creon's message from Delphi in public rather than, as Creon suggests, in private, is evidence of his kingly solicitude for his people and his trust in them, but it makes certain the full publication of the truth. His impetuous proclamation of a curse on the murderer of Laius, an unnecessary step prompted by his civic zeal, makes his final situation worse than it need have been. His anger at Tiresias forces a revelation which drives him on to accuse Creon; this in turn provokes Jocasta's revelations. And throughout the play his confidence in the efficacy of his own action, his hopefulness as the situation darkens, and his passion for discovering the truth, guide the steps of the investigation which is to reveal the detective as the criminal. All aspects of his character, good and bad alike, are equally involved; it is no frailty or error that leads him

to the terrible truth, but his total personality.

The character of Oedipus as revealed in the play does something more than explain the present action, it also explains his past. In Oedipus' speeches and actions on stage we can see the man who, given the circumstances in which Oedipus was involved, would inevitably do just what Oedipus has done. Each action on stage shows us the mood in which he committed some action in the past; his angry death sentence on Creon reveals the man who killed Laius because of an insult on the highway; his impulsive proclamation of total excommunication for the unknown murderer shows us the man who without forethought accepted the hand of Jocasta; his intelligent, persistent search for the truth shows us the brain and the courage which solved the riddle of the Sphinx. The revelation of his character in the play is at once a recreation of his past and an interpretation of the oracle which predicted his future. His character is his fate.

This organization of the material is what makes it possible for us to accept the story as tragedy at all, for it emphasizes Oedipus' independence of the oracle. When we first see Oedipus he has already committed the actions for which he is to suffer, actions prophesied, before his birth, by Apollo. But the dramatist's emphasis on Oedipus' character suggests that although Apollo has predicted what Oedipus will do, he does not determine it; Oedipus determines his own conduct, by being the

man he is. Milton's explanation of a similar situation, Adam's fall and God's foreknowledge of it, may be applied to Oedipus; foreknowledge had no influence on his fault, "which had no less prov'd certain unforcknown." The relationship between Apollo's prophecy and Oedipus' actions is not that of cause and effect. It is the relationship of two independent entities which are equated.

This correspondence between his character and his fate removes the obstacle to our full acceptance of the play which an external fate governing his action would set up. Nevertheless, we feel that he suffers more than he deserves. He has served as an example of the inadequacy of the human intellect and a warning that there is a power in the universe which humanity cannot control, nor even fully understand, but Oedipus the man still has our sympathy. Sophocles felt this too, and in a later play, his last, the *Oedipus at Colonus*, he dealt with the reward which finally balanced Oedipus' suffering. In *King Oedipus* itself there is a foreshadowing of this final development; the last scene shows us a man already beginning to recover from the shock of the catastrophe and reasserting a natural superiority. "I will obey, though upon conditions," he says to Creon when ordered back into the house, and a few lines later Creon has to say bluntly to him, "Do not seek to be master." This renewed imperiousness is the first expression of a feeling on his part that he is not entirely guilty, a beginning of the reconstitution of the

magnificent man of the opening scenes; it reaches its fulfillment in the final *Oedipus* play, in which he is a titanic figure, confident of his innocence and more masterful than he has ever been.

#### TRAGEDY—EURIPIDES

Euripides' *Medea*, produced in 431 B.C., the year that brought the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, appeared earlier than the *King Oedipus* of Sophocles, but it has a bitterness that is more in keeping with the spirit of a later age. If the *Oedipus* is, in one sense, a warning to a generation which has embarked on an intellectual revolution, the *Medea* is the ironic expression of the disillusion that comes after the shipwreck. In this play we are conscious for the first time of an attitude characteristic of modern literature, the artist's feeling of separation from his audience, the isolation of the poet. "Often previously," says *Medea* to the king,

Through being considered clever  
I have suffered much. . . .  
If you put new ideas before the  
eyes of fools  
They'll think you foolish and  
worthless into the bargain;  
And if you are thought superior  
to those who have  
Some reputation for learning,  
you will become hated.

The common background of audience and poet is disappearing, the old certainties are being undermined, the city divided. Euripides is the first Greek poet to suffer the fate of so many of the great modern writers; rejected by most of his contemporaries, he became universally



loved and admired after his death.

The change in atmosphere is clear even in Euripides' choice of subject and central character. He still dramatizes myth, but the myth he chooses is exotic and disturbing, and the protagonist is not a man, but a woman. Medea is both woman and foreigner; that is to say, in terms of the audience's prejudice and practice she is a representative of the two free-born groups in Athenian society which had almost no rights at all (though the resident foreign male had more rights than the native woman). The tragic hero is no longer a king, "one who is highly renowned and prosperous—a personage like Oedipus," but a woman, who, because she finds no redress for her wrongs in society, is driven by her passion to violate that society's most sacred laws in a rebellion against its typical representative, Jason, her husband. She is not just a woman and a foreigner, she is also a person of great intellectual power; compared to her the credulous king and her complacent husband are children, and once her mind is made up, she moves them like pawns to their proper places in her barbaric game. The myth is used for new purposes, to shock the members of the audience, attack their deepest prejudices, and shake them out of their complacent pride in the superiority of Greek masculinity.

But the play is more than a feminist melodrama. Before it is over our sympathies have come full circle; the contempt with which we regard the Jason of the

opening scenes turns to pity as we feel the measure of his loss and the ferocity of Medea's revenge. Medea's passion has carried her too far; the death of Creon and his daughter we might have accepted, but the murder of the children is too much. It was, of course, meant to be. Euripides' theme, like Homer's, is violence, but this is the unspeakable violence of the oppressed, which is greater than the violence of the oppressor, and which, because it has been long pent up, cannot be controlled.

In this, as in the other two plays, the gods have their place. In the *Agamemnon* the will of Zeus is manifested in every action and implied in every word; in the *Oedipus* the gods bide their time and watch Oedipus fulfill the truth of their prophecy; but in the *Medea*, the divine will, which is revealed at the end, is enigmatic, and far from bringing harmony, concludes the play with a terrifying discord. All through the *Medea* the human beings involved call on the gods; two especially are singled out for attention, Earth and Sun. It is by these two gods that Medea makes Aegeus swear to give her refuge in Athens, the chorus invokes them to prevent Medea's violence against her sons, and Jason wonders how Medea can look upon earth and sun after she has killed her own children. These emphatic appeals clearly raise the question of the attitude of the gods, and the answer to the question is a shock. We are not told what Earth does, but Sun sends the magic chariot on which Medea

makes her escape. His reason, too, is stated; it is not any concern for justice, but the fact that Medea is his granddaughter. Euripides is here using the letter of the myth for his own purposes. This jarring detail emphasizes the significance of the whole. The play creates a world in which there is no relation whatsoever between the powers which rule the universe and the fundamental laws of human morality. It dramatizes disorder, not just the disorder of the family of Jason and Medea, but the disorder of the universe as a whole. It is the nightmare in which the dream of the fifth century was to end, the senseless fury and degradation of permanent violence. "Flow backward to your sources, sacred rivers," the chorus sings, "And let the world's great order be reversed."

#### SOCRATES

In the last half of the fifth century the whole traditional basis of individual conduct was undermined, gradually at first by the critical approach of the Sophists and their pupils, and then rapidly, as the war accelerated the process of moral disintegration. "In peace and prosperity," says Thucydides, "both states and individuals are actuated by higher motives . . . but war, which takes away the comfortable provision of daily life, is a hard master, and tends to assimilate men's characters to their conditions." The war brought to Athens the rule of the new politicians, who reckoned only in terms of power, who carried out the massacre of Melos, and many of whom, like Alcibiades and Critias, betrayed

their city for their own ends. Community and individual were no longer one, and the individual, cast on his own resources for guidance, found only conflicting attitudes which he could not refer to any absolute standards. The mood of postwar Athens oscillated between a fanatic, unthinking reassertion of traditional values and a weary cynicism which wanted only to be left alone. The only thing common to the two extremes was a distrust of intelligence.

In the disillusioned gloom of the years of defeat the Athenians began to feel more and more exasperation with a voice they had been listening to for many years, the voice of Socrates, a stonemason who for most of his adult life had made it his business to discuss with his fellow citizens the great issues of which the Athenians were now so weary—the nature of justice, of truth, of piety. Unlike the Sophists, he did not lecture, nor did he charge a fee; his method was dialectic, the search for truth by a process of questions and answers, and his dedication to his mission had kept him poor. But the initial results of his discussions were often infuriatingly like the results of sophistic teaching. By questions and answers he succeeded in exposing the illogicality of his opponent's position, but Socrates did not often provide a substitute for the erroneous belief he had destroyed. Yet it is clear that he did believe in absolute standards, and what is more, he believed they could be discovered by a process of logical inquiry and supported by logical

proof. His ethics rested on an intellectual basis. The resentment against him, which came to a head in 399 B.C., is partly explained by the fact that he satisfied neither extreme of the postwar mood; he questioned the old standards in order to establish new, and he refused to let the Athenians live in peace, for he preached that it was every man's duty to think his way through to the truth. In this last respect he was the prophet of the new age; for him the city and the accepted code were no substitute for the task of self-examination which each individual must set himself and carry through to a conclusion. The characteristic statement of the old Athens was public, in the assembly or the theater; Socrates proclaimed the right and duty of each individual to work out his own salvation and made clear his distrust of public life: ". . . he who will fight for the right . . . must have a private station and not a public one."

Socrates himself wrote nothing; we know what we do about him mainly from the writings of his pupil Plato, a philosophical and literary genius of the first rank. It is very difficult to distinguish between what Socrates actually said and what Plato put into his mouth, but there is general agreement that the *Apology*, which Plato wrote as a representation of what Socrates said at his trial, is the clearest picture we have of the historical Socrates. He is on trial for impiety and "corrupting the youth"; he deals with these charges, but he also takes the opportunity to present a defense and explana-

tion of the mission to which his life has been devoted.

The *Apology* is a defiant speech; Socrates rides roughshod over legal forms and seems to neglect no opportunity of outraging his hearers. But this defiance is not stupidity (as he hints himself, he could, if he had wished, have made a speech to please the court), nor is it a deliberate courting of martyrdom. It is the only course possible for him in the circumstances if he is not to betray his life's work, for Socrates knows as well as his accusers that what the Athenians really want is to silence him without having to take his life. What Socrates is making clear is that there is no such easy way out; he will have no part of any compromise that would restrict his freedom of speech or undermine his moral position. The speech is a sample of what the Athenians will have to put up with if they allow him to live; he will continue to be the gadfly which stings the sluggish horse. He will go on persuading them not to be concerned for their persons or their property, but first and chiefly to care about the improvement of the soul. He has spent his life denying the validity of worldly standards, and he will not accept them now.

He was declared guilty, and condemned to death. While in prison awaiting execution, he was approached by a wealthy friend, Crito, who had made arrangements for his escape from Athens. In the dialogue *Crito*, Plato reconstructs the discussion between the two men. Socrates refused to escape, and the argu-

ments put into his mouth in this dialogue show that although he rejected the political life and the unwavering adherence to one political system which it demanded, he still felt himself bound by the laws of the city. Unlike Alcibiades, the typical representative of the sophistic spirit, who betrayed his country when it had found him guilty of a crime, Socrates refused to disobey the laws even when they demanded his own death.

The sentence was duly carried out. And in Plato's account of the execution we can see the calmness and kindness of a man who has led a useful life and who is secure in his faith that, contrary to appearances, "no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death."

#### THE DIFFUSION OF GREEK CULTURE

The century that followed the death of Socrates saw the exhaustion of the Greek city-states in constant internecine warfare. Politically and economically bankrupt, they fell under the power of the semibarbarous kingdom of Macedon, in the north, whose king, Philip, combined a ferocious energy with a cynicism which enabled him to take full advantage of the corrupt governments of the city-states. Greek liberty ended at the battle of Chaeronea in 338 B.C., and Philip's son Alexander inherited a powerful army and the political control of all Greece. He led his Macedonian and Greek armies against Persia, and in a few brilliant campaigns became master of an empire which extended into Egypt in the south and to the borders of India in the

east. He died at Babylon in 323 B.C., and his empire broke up into a number of independent kingdoms ruled by his generals; but the results of his fantastic achievements were more durable than might have been expected. Into the newly conquered territories came thousands of Greeks who wished to escape from the political futility and economic crisis of the homeland, and wherever they went they took with them their language, their culture, and their typical buildings, the gymnasium and the theater. At Alexandria in Egypt, for example, a Greek library was formed to preserve the texts of Greek literature for the scholars who edited them, a school of Greek poetry flourished, Greek mathematicians and geographers made new advances in science. The Middle East became, as far as the cities were concerned, a Greek-speaking area; and when, some two or three centuries later, the first accounts of Christ's life and teaching were written down, they were written in Greek, the language on which the cultural homogeneity of the whole area was based.

#### ROME

When Alexander died at Babylon in 323 B.C., the Italian city of Rome, situated on the Tiber in the western coastal plain, was engaged in a struggle for the control of central Italy. Less than a hundred years later (269 B.C.) Rome, in control of the whole Italian peninsula, was drawn into a hundred-year war against the Phoenician city of Carthage, on the West African

coast, from which she emerged mistress of the western Mediterranean. At the end of the first century B.C., in spite of a series of civil wars fought with savage vindictiveness and on a continental scale, Rome was the capital of an empire which stretched from the Straits of Gibraltar to the frontiers of Palestine. This empire gave peace and orderly government to the Mediterranean area for the next two centuries, and for two centuries after that maintained a desperate but losing battle against the invading savage tribes moving in from the north and east. When it finally went down, it left behind it the ideal of the world-state, an ideal which was to be reconstituted as a reality by the medieval church, which ruled from the same center, Rome, and with a spiritual authority as great as the secular authority it replaced.

The achievements of the Romans, not only their conquests but also their success in consolidating the conquests and organizing the conquered, are best understood in the light of the Roman character. Unlike the Greek, the Roman was above all a practical man. He might have no aptitude for pure mathematics, but he could build an aqueduct to last two thousand years; he was not notable as a political theorist, but he organized a complicated yet stable federation which held Italy loyal to him in the presence of invading armies. He was conservative to the core; his strongest authority was *mos maiorum*, the custom of his predecessors; a monument of this conservatism,

the great body of Roman law, is one of his greatest contributions to Western civilization. The quality he most admired was *gravitas*, seriousness of attitude and purpose, and his highest words of commendation were "manliness," "industry," "discipline." Pericles in his funeral speech praised the Athenian for his adaptability, versatility, and grace; this would have seemed strange praise to a Roman, whose ideal of personal and civic virtue was different. "By her ancient custom and her men the Roman state stands," says Ennius the Roman poet, in a line which by its metrical heaviness emphasizes the stability implied in the key word "stands": *mori-bus antiquis res stat Romana virisque*.

#### LATIN LITERATURE—

##### LUCRETIUS AND CICERO

Greek history begins, not with a king, a battle, or the founding of a city, but with an epic poem; the literary achievement preceded the political by many centuries. The Romans, on the other hand, had conquered half the world before they began to write. The stimulus to the creation of Latin literature was the Greek literature which the Romans discovered when, in the second century B.C., they assumed political responsibility for Greece and the Near East. Latin literature began with a translation of the *Odyssey*, made by a Greek prisoner of war, and with the exception of satire, until Latin literature became Christian, the model was always Greek. The Latin writer (especially the poet) borrowed wholesale from his Greek original, not

furtively, but openly and proudly, as a tribute to the master from whom he had learned. But this frank acknowledgment of indebtedness should not blind us to the fact that Latin literature is original, and sometimes profoundly so. Writing in the first century B.C., both Lucretius and Cicero, the one a poet and the other an orator and philosopher, followed Greek models in the works by which they are represented in this volume. Yet the results were not slavish imitations; each made what he borrowed peculiarly his own.

Lucretius' poem *On the Nature of Things* (*De rerum natura*) is a Latin presentation of the philosophical system of Epicurus, a Greek philosopher of the fourth century B.C. Epicurus had reacted to the hopelessness of his age, which saw the breakdown of the Greek city-states, by propounding a philosophy that described the universe as the result of blind combinations of atoms. With Epicurus the philosophy was not completely materialistic, for it allowed the existence of the gods, though it denied them any rôle in the government of the universe and asserted that they had no interest in human affairs. But in Lucretius' version, especially in his thoroughly materialistic account (in Book V) of the development of human civilization from primitive savagery, the gods play no part; far from creating man or his civilization, the gods are themselves created by humanity out of its dreams and ignorance.

The ethical precepts of Epicurus' philosophy are summed up

in his famous admonition to pursue pleasure, which according to his definition, however, consisted in living a virtuous life. It is a philosophy which encourages a withdrawal from public life, and is in this respect a typical product of the political chaos of the fourth century. This is probably one of the reasons why it attracted Lucretius, for he too lived in an age of social conflict which every twenty years or so erupted in revolution and civil war. But it did not attract many Romans; their respect for action and their deep-rooted worship of duty were obstacles too great to be overcome even by Lucretius' great poetic power.

How great that power is can be seen in the conclusion of his third book, in which he draws the moral from his exposition of the atomic basis of phenomena, and proclaims that death is not to be feared. Death is merely not-being, a rearrangement of the atoms of which we are composed, the dead feel neither pleasure nor pain—so runs his argument, and if it were no more complicated than that it would be just a restatement, though admittedly a magnificent one, of an Epicurean commonplace. But as he develops the argument, we can detect beneath the authoritative calm of the teacher the cry of a man in an agony of doubt and fear. As we read Nature's speech to the coward who is afraid to die, we become increasingly aware that no one is more afraid of death than the poet himself. The vehemence and passion of these famous lines is the mark of a man trying to convince himself

rather than his audience; the fears of the unenlightened, animal, part of the human being, which in the face of death will abandon everything except the will to live, are too vividly evoked to be stilled by Nature's argument. And the argument itself, that death is no more than the extinction of consciousness, is a frightening one, especially for an Epicurean, who narrows his ethical and intellectual concern to the restricted scope of his individual self, who "cultivates his garden," and who by his withdrawal from society rejects the corporate immortality of family, city, or race. Lucretius believes in the Epicurean system, but on this central point of the fear of death it brings him little comfort. The disturbance in the poet's own soul, expressed in the tension and violence of these great lines, has turned a philosophical sermon into great poetry.

Much more acceptable to the Roman temperament is the vision of a future life of happiness for those who have been outstanding in their service to the state which is the subject of Cicero's "Dream of Scipio." This is the final chapter of his great work *On the Republic* (*De republica*), the myth which concludes the philosophical discussion. The work as a whole is an imitation of Plato's *Republic*, which is also rounded off by a myth, the story told by Er, who returns from the dead and describes to the living the life of the souls, "the just going up the heavenly way to their reward, the unjust going down to the place of punishment." But Cicero's

imitation is characteristically Roman. Instead of imagining, as Plato did, the ideal city, Cicero deals with the Roman republic, its birth, growth, and maturity, and his myth shows the same practical, social viewpoint, which is the hallmark of Roman philosophy at its best. "But hold fast to this . . .," says Scipio, Cicero's spokesman: "For all those who have guarded, aided, and increased the welfare of their fatherland there is a place reserved in heaven, where they shall dwell in happiness forever." Lucretius' desperate assertion that the individual must live for himself and accept the obliteration of his personality in death is counterpoised by a vision of an eternal heaven for those who devote themselves to the supreme duty, which, for the Roman, is the public duty.

#### LATIN LITERATURE—VIRGIL

When Cicero wrote "The Dream of Scipio" the republican form of government which was his larger subject still existed, but its days were numbered. The institutions of the city-state proved inadequate for world government. The civil conflict which had disrupted the republic for more than a hundred years ended finally in the establishment of a powerful executive. Although the Senate, which had been the controlling body of the republic, retained an impressive share of the power, the new arrangement developed inevitably toward autocracy, the rule of the executive, the emperor, as he was called once the system was stabilized. The first of the long line of Roman emperors who gave stable government to the

Roman world during the first two centuries A.D. was Octavius, known generally by his title, Augustus. He had made his way cautiously through the intrigues and bloodshed that followed the murder of his uncle Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., until by 31 B.C. he controlled the western half of the empire. In that year he fought a decisive battle with the ruler of the eastern half of the empire, Mark Antony, who was supported by Cleopatra, queen of Egypt. Octavius' victory at Actium united the empire under one authority and ushered in an age of peace and reconstruction. It was in the opening years of the new age that Virgil wrote (and left unfinished at his early death), the great Roman epic, the *Aeneid*.

Like all the Latin poets, Virgil built on the solid foundations of his Greek predecessors. The story of Aeneas, the Trojan prince who came to Italy and whose descendants founded Rome, combines the themes of the *Odyssey* (the wanderer in search of home), and the *Iliad* (the hero in battle). Virgil borrows Homeric turns of phrase, similes, sentiments, whole incidents; his Aeneas, like Achilles, sacrifices prisoners to the shade of a friend, and, like Odysseus, descends alive to the world of the dead. But unlike Achilles, Aeneas does not satisfy the great passion of his life, nor, like Odysseus, does he find a home in which to end his days in peace. The personal objectives of both of Homer's heroes are sacrificed by Aeneas for a greater objective. There is something greater than himself. His mission, imposed on

him by the gods, is to found a city, from which, in the fullness of time, will spring the Roman state.

Homer presents us in the *Iliad* with the tragic pattern of the individual will, Achilles' wrath. But Aeneas is more than an individual, he is the prototype of the ideal Roman ruler; his qualities are the devotion to duty and the seriousness of purpose which were to give the Mediterranean world two centuries of ordered government. Aeneas' mission begins in disorder in the burning city of Troy, but he leaves it carrying his father on his shoulders and leading his little son by the hand. This famous picture emphasizes the fact that, unlike Achilles, he is securely set in a continuity of generations, the immortality of the family group, just as his mission to found a city, a home for the gods of Troy whose statues he carries with him, places him in a political and religious continuity. Achilles has no future. When he mentions his father and son, neither of whom he will see again, he emphasizes for us the loneliness of his short career; the brilliance of his life is that of a meteor which burns itself out to darkness. Odysseus has a father, wife, and son, and his heroic efforts are directed toward re-establishing himself in his proper context, that home in which he will be no longer man in a world of magic and terror, but man in an organized and continuous community. But he fights for himself. Aeneas, on the other hand, suffers and fights, not for himself, but for the future; his own life is unhappy and his death



miserable. Yet he can console himself with the glory of his sons to come, the pageant of Roman achievement which he is shown by his father in the world below and which he carries on his shield. Aeneas' future is Virgil's present; the consolidation of the Roman peace under Augustus is the reward of Aeneas' unhappy life of effort and suffering.

Summarized like this, the *Aeneid* sounds like propaganda, which, in one sense of the word, it is. But what saves it from the besetting fault of even the best propaganda—the partial concealment of the truth—is the fact that Virgil maintains an independence of the power which he is celebrating, and sees his hero in the round. He knows that the Roman ideal of devotion to duty has another side, the suppression of many aspects of the personality; that the man who wins and uses power must sacrifice much of himself, must live a life which, compared with that of Achilles or Odysseus, is constricted. In Virgil's poem Aeneas betrays the great passion of his life, his love for Dido, queen of Carthage. He does it reluctantly, but nevertheless he leaves her, and the full realization of what he has lost comes to him only when he meets her ghost in the world below. He weeps (as he did not at Carthage) and he pleads, in stronger terms than he did then, the overriding power which forced him to depart. "It was not of my own will, Dido, I left your land." She leaves him without a word, her silence as impervious to pleas and tears as his at Carthage once, and he fol-

lows her weeping as she goes back to join her first love, her husband Sychaeus. He has sacrificed his love to something greater, but this does not insulate him from unhappiness. The limitations upon the dedicated man are emphasized by the contrasting figure of Dido, who follows her own impulse always, even in death; by her death, Virgil tells us expressly, she forestalls fate, breaks loose from the pattern in which Aeneas remains to the bitter end.

The angry reactions which this part of the poem has produced in many critics are the true measure of Virgil's success. Aeneas does act in such a way that he forfeits much of our sympathy, but this is surely exactly what Virgil intended. The Dido episode is not, as many critics have supposed, a flaw in the great design, a case of Virgil's sympathy outrunning his admiration for Aeneas; it is Virgil's emphatic statement of the sacrifice which the Roman ideal of duty demands. Aeneas' sacrifice is so great that few of us could make it ourselves, and none of us can contemplate it in another without a feeling of loss. It is an expression of the famous Virgilian sadness which informs every line of the *Aeneid* and which makes a poem that was in its historical context a command performance into the great epic which has dominated Western literature ever since.

#### JESUS OF NAZARETH

In the last years of Augustus' life, in the Roman province of Judaea, there was born to Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth, and his wife, Mary, a son who was at

once the final product of an old tradition and the starting point of a new. He was the last of the Hebrew prophets, but His message, unlike theirs, was to spread outside the boundaries of Palestine until it became the religion of the Roman Empire. His life on earth was short; it ended in the agony of crucifixion at about His thirty-third year. This event is a point of intersection of the three main lines of development of the ancient world—Hebrew, Greek, and Latin—for this Hebrew prophet was executed by a Roman governor, and His life and teachings were written down in the Greek language. These documents, which eventually, with some additions, constituted what we now know as the New Testament, circulated in the Greek-speaking half of the Roman Empire, and later, in a Latin translation, in the West. They became the sacred texts of a church which, at first persecuted by and then triumphantly associated with Roman imperial power, outlasted the destruction of the empire and ruled over a spiritual kingdom which still exists.

The teaching of Christ was revolutionary not only in terms of Greek and Roman feeling but also in terms of the Hebrew religious tradition. The Hebrew idea of a personal God who is yet not anthropomorphic, who is omnipotent, omniscient, and infinitely just, was now broadened to include among His attributes an infinite mercy which tempered the justice. Greek and Roman religion was outward and visible, the formal practice of ritual acts in a social context;

Christianity was inward and spiritual, the important relationship was that between the individual soul and God. All human beings were on an equal plane in the eyes of their Creator. This idea ran counter to the theory and practice of an institution basic to the economy of the ancient world, slavery. Christ was rejected by His own people, as prophets have always been, and His death on the cross and His resurrection provided His followers and the future converts with an unforgettable symbol of a new dispensation, the son of God in human form suffering to atone for the sins of humanity, the supreme expression of divine mercy. This conception is the basis of the teaching of Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, who in the middle years of the first century A.D. changed Christianity from a Jewish sect to a worldwide movement with flourishing churches all over Asia Minor and Greece, and even in Rome. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul gives detailed advice and formulates doctrine for the church at Corinth, which he himself had helped to found many years before. The burden of his message is the frailty and corruption of this life and world, and the certainty of resurrection. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." To those who had accepted this vision the secular materialism which was the dominant view in the new era of peace and progress guaranteed by the stabilization of Roman rule was no longer tenable.

## LATIN LITERATURE—PETRONIUS

The pragmatic outlook which Christianity was to supplant is to be seen most clearly portrayed in the satiric masterpiece of the Roman aristocrat Petronius. The work which is attributed to him, the *Satyricon*, was probably written during the principate of Nero (54–68 A.D.), a period in which the material benefits and the spiritual weakness of the new order had already become apparent. The *Satyricon* itself has survived only in fragments; we know nothing certain about the scope of the work as a whole, but from the fragments it is clear that this book is the work of a satiric genius, perhaps the most original genius of Latin literature.

"The Banquet of Trimalchio," one of the longer fragments, selections from which are included here, shows us a tradesman's world. The narrator, a student of literature, and his cronies may have an aristocratic disdain for the businessmen at whose tables they eat, but they know that Trimalchio and his kind have inherited the earth. Trimalchio began life as a foreign slave, but he is now a multimillionaire. The representative of culture, Agamemnon the teacher, drinks his wine and praises his fatuous remarks; he is content to be the court jester, the butt of Trimalchio's witticisms. Trimalchio knows no god but Mercury, the patron of business operations, but the gold bracelet, a percentage of his income which he has dedicated to Mercury, he wears on his own arm. He identifies himself with the god, and worships himself,

the living embodiment of the power of money. The conversation at his table is a sardonic revelation of the temper of a whole civilization. Written in brilliantly humorous and colloquial style it exposes mercilessly a blindness to spiritual values of any kind, a distrust of the intellect, and a ferocious preoccupation with the art of cheating one's neighbor. The point is made more effective by the conscious evocation of the epic tradition throughout the work. The names alone of the teacher, Agamemnon, and his assistant in instruction, Menelaus; the wall paintings which show "the Iliad and the Odyssey and the gladiator's show given by Laenas"; Trimalchio's exhibition of monstrous ignorance of Homer (which nobody dares to correct); the Nestorian tone of Ganymede, who regrets the old days when men were men (he is talking of the time when Saffinius forced the bakers to lower the price of bread)—one touch after another reminds us that these figures are the final product of a tradition which began with Achilles and Odysseus.

The satire is witty, but it is none the less profound. All of them live for the moment, in material enjoyment, but they know that it cannot last. "Let us remember the living" is their watchword, but they cannot forget the dead. And as the banquet goes on, the thought of death, suppressed beneath the debased Epicureanism of Trimalchio and his associates, emerges slowly to the surface of their consciousness and comes to dominate it completely. The last arrival at

the banquet is Habinnas the undertaker, and his coming coincides with the last stage of Trimalchio's drunkenness, the maudlin exhibition of his funeral clothes and the description of his tomb. "I would that I were dead," says the Sibyl in the story Trimalchio tells early in the evening; at its end he himself acts out his own funeral, complete with ointment, robes, wine, and trumpet players. The fact of death, the one fact which the practical materialism of Trimalchio and his circle can neither deny nor assimilate, asserts itself triumphantly as the supreme fact in the emptiness of Trimalchio's mind.

#### ST. AUGUSTINE

When Augustine was born in North Africa in 354 A.D. the era of Roman peace was already over. The invading barbarians had pierced the empire's defenses and were increasing their pressure every year. The economic basis of the empire was cracking under the strain of the enormous taxation needed to support the army; the land was exhausted. The empire was Christian, but the Church was split, beset by heresies and organized heretical sects. The empire was about to go down to destruction, and there was every prospect that the Church would go down with it.

Augustine, one of the men responsible for the consolidation of the Church in the West, especially for the systematization of its doctrine and policy, was not converted to Christianity until he had reached middle life. "Late I loved you, Beauty so ancient and so new," he says in his *Confessions* (*Confessiones*,

397 A.D.), written long after his conversion. The lateness of his conversion and his regret for his wasted youth were among the sources of the energy which drove him to assume the intellectual leadership of the Western Church and to guarantee, by combating heresy on the one hand and laying new ideological foundations for Christianity on the other, the Church's survival through the dark centuries to come. Augustine had been brought up in the literary and philosophical tradition of the classical world, and it is partly because of his assimilation of classical literature and method to Christian training and teaching that the literature of the ancient world survived at all when Roman power collapsed in a welter of bloodshed and destruction which lasted for generations.

In his *Confessions* he set down, for the benefit of others, the story of his early life and his conversion to Christianity. This is, as far as we know, the first real ancient autobiography, and that fact itself is a significant expression of the Christian spirit, which proclaims the value of the individual soul and the importance of its relation with God. Throughout the *Confessions* Augustine talks directly to God, in humility, yet conscious that God is concerned for him personally; at the same time he comes to an understanding of his own feelings and development as a human being which marks his *Confessions* as one of the great literary documents of the Western world. His description of his childhood is the only detailed account of the childhood

of a great man which antiquity has left us, and his accurate observation and keen perception are informed by the Hebrew and Christian idea of the sense of sin. "So young, and such a sinner"—from the beginning of his narrative to the end Augustine sees man not as the Greek at his most optimistic tended to see him, the center and potential master of the universe, but as a child, wandering in ignorance, capable of reclamation only through the divine mercy which waits eternally for him to turn to it.

In Augustine are combined the intellectual tradition of the ancient world at its best and the religious feeling which was the characteristic of the Middle Ages. The transition from the

old world to the new can be seen in his pages; his analytical intellect pursues its Odyssey through strange and scattered islands—the mysticism of the Manichees, the skepticism of the Academic philosophers, the fatalism of the astrologers—until he finds his home in the Church to which he was to render such great service. His account of his conversion in the garden at Milan records the true moment of transition from the ancient to the medieval world; the innumerable defeats and victories, the burning towns and ravaged farms, the bloodshed, dates, and statistics of the end of an era are all illuminated and ordered by this moment in the history of the human spirit. Here is the point of change itself.

account of his unsuccessful campaign in Book IV, Chapters 103-109 of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, and mentions his exile in Book V, Chapter 26. He probably returned to Athens after the defeat in 404 B.C., but he did not live long enough to complete his history of the war; his book ends with the events of the year 411 B.C.

A translation by Benjamin Jowett of the complete work is included in *The Greek Historians*, edited by F. R. B. Godolphin, Vol. I, 1942. There is also a translation by R. Crawley, 1876, reprinted 1934.

CRITICISM. J. H. Finlay, Jr., *Thucydides*, 1947.

#### SOPHOCLES

LIFE AND WRITINGS. Born in 495 B.C. He was victorious over Aeschylus in the dramatic contest in 468 B.C. In 440 B.C. he was appointed one of ten generals for the expedition against Samos. He died in 406 B.C. His plays are *Antigone*, 441? B.C.; *Ajax*; *King Oedipus* (*Oedipus the King*); *Electra*; *Trachiniae*; *Philoctetes*, 409 B.C.; *Oedipus at Colonus* (produced after his death, 401 B.C.).

The standard edition in English, by Sir Richard C. Jebb, consists of seven separate volumes, 1884-1896, each containing a careful prose translation. For modern translations see E. F. Watling, *The Theban Plays*, 1947; Dudley Fitts, *Greek Plays in Modern Translations*, 1947; David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, *Sophocles, Three Tragedies*, 1954.

CRITICISM. C. M. Bowra, *Sophoclean Tragedy*, 1944; T. B. L. Webster, *An Introduction to Sophocles*, 1936; Cedric Whitman, *Sophocles*, 1951.

#### EURIPIDES

LIFE AND WRITINGS. Born in 480 B.C. His first dramatic victory was in 441 B.C. Among his plays are *Alcestis*, 438 B.C.; *Medea*, 431 B.C.; *Hippolytus*, 428 B.C.; *Trojan Women*, 415? B.C.; *Orestes*, 408 B.C. Some time after this he left Athens for Macedonia, where he died in 406 B.C. The *Bacchae* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* were produced at Athens after his death. Eighteen of his plays have been preserved. Good translations are obtainable in Philip Vellacott, *Euripides, Alcestis and Other Plays*, 1953; David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, *Euripides, Four Tragedies*, 1955.

CRITICISM. G. M. A. Grube, *The Drama of Euripides*, 1941.

#### PLATO

LIFE. Born in Athens in 429 or 428 B.C. He was present at the trial of Socrates, his teacher, in 399 B.C. After this he traveled widely, eventually returning to Athens to found his philosophical school, the Academy. He made

two visits to Sicily to act as philosophical and political tutor to the younger Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, but both of these interventions in practical affairs were unfortunate. He died in 347 B.C.

WRITINGS. The whole of his work is preserved; all of his writings except the last, *The Laws*, are dialogues in which Socrates is the chief speaker. A complete translation is Benjamin Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, 1925. The best translation of Plato's most famous work, *The Republic*, is by F. M. Cornford, 1945. Translations by Percy Bysshe Shelley of the *Ion* and *Symposium* are to be found in *Five Dialogues of Plato*, Everyman's Library, 1952.

CRITICISM. A. E. Taylor, *Plato, The Man and His Work*, 1927.

#### ARISTOTLE

LIFE. Born at Stagira (Macedonia) in 384 B.C. In 367 B.C. he went to Athens and became a pupil of Plato at the Academy. He left Athens in 347 B.C. (the year Plato died), spent some years in the Greek cities of Asia Minor, and in 342 B.C. went to Macedonia as tutor to the young Alexander, then thirteen years of age. In 335 B.C., when Alexander succeeded to the throne of Macedonia, Aristotle returned to Athens, where he founded a school, the Lyceum. He directed the school, lecturing and writing, until 323 B.C., the year of Alexander's death at Babylon. Aristotle himself died at Chalcis, in Euboea, in the next year.

WRITINGS. His writings cover almost the whole field of human knowledge. Among the subjects he treated are logic, rhetoric, literary criticism, physics, metaphysics, politics, mathematics, meteorology, zoology, and history. For the complete works see the Oxford translation, completed in 1931. For the *Poetics*, see Ingram Bywater, *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, 1909; S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and the Fine Arts*, 1907.

CRITICISM. Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle*, 1936.

#### ROME—GENERAL

For a good one-volume history of Rome see M. Cary, *History of Rome*, 1938.

#### LUCRETIVUS

LIFE AND WRITINGS. Titus Lucretius Carus, born about 99 B.C. He died in 55 B.C., a suicide, according to rumor. His only work is the didactic poem *On the Nature of Things* (*De rerum natura*), a philosophical poem in six books. The best edition (with prose translation) is by C. Bailey, 3 vols., 1946. For a verse translation of the whole poem see the version by W. E. Leonard, Everyman's Library, 1947.

**CRITICISM.** E. E. Sikes, *Lucretius, Poet and Philosopher*, 1936.

#### CICERO

**LIFE AND WRITINGS.** Marcus Tullius Cicero, born in 106 B.C. He studied at Athens, went into law, and soon became prominent in politics. In 70 B.C. he successfully pleaded the case of the Sicilians against Verres, a corrupt governor. In 63 B.C. he attained the highest republican office, the consulate, and during his term put down forcibly an insurrection led by Catiline. Later, a reaction against his policies caused him to retire from Rome, he returned in 55 B.C. When the civil war broke out in 49 B.C. he took sides with Pompey against Julius Caesar; after Pompey's defeat and death he was pardoned and returned to Rome. After Caesar's murder in 44 B.C. Cicero led the opposition against Caesar's lieutenant, Antony, and he was murdered in 43 B.C. at Antony's orders. He has left a great number of speeches, both forensic and political, which have served as models for Western oratory ever since; philosophical works, in which he made available to the Latin-speaking (and medieval) world the achievements of Greek philosophy; works on rhetoric; and a huge collection of private letters, which give a fascinating and uncensored picture of his life and times. Translations of almost all of his works are to be found in the Loeb Classical Library.

**BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.** For a good biography see E. G. Sihler, *Cicero of Arpinum*, 1914. See also J. L. Strachan-Davidson, *Cicero and the Fall of the Roman Republic*, 1903.

#### VIRGIL

**LIFE AND WRITINGS.** Publius Virgilius Maro, born in 70 B.C. in the north of Italy. Very little is known about his life. The earliest work which is certainly his is the *Bucolics*, a collection of poems in the pastoral genre which have

had enormous influence. These were followed by the *Georgics*, a didactic poem on farming, in four books, which many critics consider his finest work. The *Aeneid*, the Roman epic, was left unfinished at his early death in 19 B.C. Recent translations are by Cecil Day Lewis, *The Georgics*, 1940, and *The Aeneid of Virgil*, 1952. John Dryden's classic versions of the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* can be found in *The Complete Poems of John Dryden*, 1949.

**CRITICISM.** T. R. Glover, *Virgil*, 1923; W. F. J. Knight, *Roman Vergil*, 1944.

#### PETRONIUS

**LIFE.** It is not certain that Caius Petronius (Arbiter) was the author of the *Satyricon*, but he is the best candidate. A friend of Nero's, he committed suicide at the imperial order after becoming involved in the Pisonian conspiracy against the emperor in 65 A.D. A brilliant account of Petronius' character and death is given by Tacitus in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of Book XVI of the *Annals*.

#### ST. AUGUSTINE

**LIFE AND WRITINGS.** Aurelius Augustinus, born in 354 A.D. at Tagaste, in North Africa. He was baptized as a Christian in 387 A.D. and ordained bishop of Hippo, in North Africa, in 395 A.D. When he died there in 430 A.D. the city was besieged by Gothic invaders. Besides the *Confessions* (*Confessiones*, written in 397 A.D.) he wrote *The City of God* (*De civitate dei*, finished in 426 A.D.) and many polemical works against schismatics and heretics. Translations of *The City of God* may be found in Everyman's Library and also in the Loeb Classical Library, which also includes some of his letters. For a modern translation of the *Confessions* see F. J. Sheed, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, 1943.

## The Old Testament\*

[The Creation]†

1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

\* The text of these selections from the Holy Bible is that of the King

James, or Authorized, Version.

† Genesis 1:1—3:24.

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters,<sup>1</sup> and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl<sup>2</sup> that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and

1. The firmament is the sky, which seen from below has the appearance of a ceiling; the waters above it are those

which come down in the form of rain.  
2. winged creatures of all kinds.



over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

2. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created,<sup>3</sup> in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third

3. This is the beginning of a different account of the Creation, which does not agree in all respects with the first.

river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

3. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who

told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

*[The Story of Joseph]\**

37. . . . Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father<sup>1</sup> their evil report.<sup>2</sup> Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and

\* From Genesis 37:2—46:7.  
1. Israel.

2. Joseph reported their misdeeds.

they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to<sup>a</sup> my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan. And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him; and they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels

3. bowed down to.

bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen;<sup>4</sup> and they<sup>5</sup> drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they<sup>6</sup> brought Joseph into Egypt.

And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go? And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no. And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob<sup>7</sup> rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him. . . .

39. And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh,<sup>8</sup> captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.<sup>9</sup>

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he

4. The confusion in this passage may be due to the fact that the version we have is a composite of two different versions.

5. the brothers.

6. the Ishmeelites.

7. Israel.

8. the Egyptian king.

9. handsome.

hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got him out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, that she called unto the men of her house, and spoke unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out. And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his<sup>10</sup> hand; because the Lord was with him,<sup>11</sup> and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

40. And it came to pass after these things that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were

10. Joseph's.

11. Joseph.

bound in the prison. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you. And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; and in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon. When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head: and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: the three baskets are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

41. And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine<sup>12</sup> and fat-fleshed; and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. And the

12. cattle.

ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank<sup>13</sup> and good. And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker: and we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river: and, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow: and, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: and the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine; and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: and, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me.

And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven goods ears are seven years: the

13. fat.



dream is one. And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: what God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land<sup>14</sup> of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

And Joseph was thirty years old and when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. And in the seven plentiful years the earth brought forth by handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field,

14. i.e., of the crop.

which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number. And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him. And Joseph called the name of the first born Manasseh:<sup>15</sup> For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim:<sup>16</sup> For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth<sup>17</sup> began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth. And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

42. Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.

And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin,<sup>18</sup> Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him. And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies. And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And

15. meaning "causing to forget."

16. meaning "fruitfulness."

17. scarcity.

18. more closely related than the other ten since he is the son of the same mother.

they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not. And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies. And he put them all together into ward three days. And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God: if ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: but bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack; and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?

And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying, The man, who is lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies: we be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone: and bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye

are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land.

And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.

And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

43. And the famine was sore in the land. And it came to pass, when they had caten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food. And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? And they said, The man asked us straitly<sup>19</sup> of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down? And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever: for except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time. And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds: and take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight: take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin.

19. strictly, precisely.

If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay,<sup>20</sup> and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon. And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen,<sup>21</sup> and our asses. And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house, and said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food; and it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand. And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks. And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simcon out unto them. And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave ~~them~~ water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender. And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

And when Joseph came home, ~~they~~ brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spoke? Is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spoke unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself and said, Set on bread. And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians. And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his

20. kill an animal for meat.

21. slaves.

birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. And he took and sent messes<sup>22</sup> unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

44. And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whcreby indeed he divineth?<sup>23</sup> ye have done evil in so doing.

And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen. And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless. Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found. And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.

22. portions.

23. Joseph's servant is to claim that this is the cup Joseph uses for clairvoy-

ance; the diviner stared into a cup of water and foretold the future.

My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants<sup>24</sup> shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant<sup>25</sup> became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant<sup>26</sup> abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

45. Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet

24. we.  
25. I.

26. me.

birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. And he took and sent messes<sup>22</sup> unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

44. And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth?<sup>23</sup> ye have done evil in so doing.

And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen. And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless. Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found. And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.

22. portions.

23. Joseph's servant is to claim that this is the cup Joseph uses for clairvoy-

ance; the diviner stared into a cup of water and foretold the future.



My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants<sup>24</sup> shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant<sup>25</sup> became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant<sup>26</sup> abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

45. Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud; and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet

24. we.  
25. I.

26. me.

there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all thou hast: and there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade<sup>27</sup> your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; and take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is your's. And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob

their father revived. And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

46. And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

*The Book of Job\**

1. There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed<sup>1</sup> evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day;<sup>2</sup> and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them,<sup>3</sup> and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan<sup>4</sup> came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and echeweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him,

\* Chapters 1-14, 29-31, 38-42.

1. avoided.

2. in rotation at each son's house.

3. by ritual purification.

4. His name means "the accuser," "the opposer."

and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands,<sup>5</sup> and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Then Job arose and rent<sup>6</sup> his mantle,<sup>7</sup> and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

2. Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone

5. split up into three groups.

6. tore.

7. cloak.

and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal;<sup>8</sup> and he sat down among the ashes.

Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

3. After this opened Job his mouth, and ~~curse~~<sup>8</sup> his day. And Job spake, and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. Let them curse it that curse the day,<sup>9</sup> who are ready to raise up their mourning. Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day: because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent<sup>10</sup> me? or why the breasts that I should suck? For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: or as an hidden untimely birth

8. with.

9. sorcerers, magicians. A more literal translation of the next clause would read, "who are ready to rouse up levia-

than." Leviathan was a dragon that was thought to produce darkness.

10. receive.

I had not been; as infants which never saw light. There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave? Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in? For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters. For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet;<sup>11</sup> yet trouble came.

4. Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said, If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? But who can withhold himself from speaking? Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled. Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?<sup>12</sup> Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed. The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken. The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad. Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little<sup>13</sup> thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: How much less<sup>14</sup> in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it. Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? They die, even without wisdom.

11. For *was*, *had*, and *was*, read, "am," "have," and "am."

12. A more literal translation of this sentence would read, "Is not thy fear

of God thy confidence, and thy hope the uprightness of thy ways?"

13. a whisper.

14. how much less does he trust.

5. Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn? For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one. I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation. His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them. Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns,<sup>15</sup> and the robber swalloweth up their substance. Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number: who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields: to set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong. They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night. But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty. So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth. Behold, happy is the man whom God correctoth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in ~~six~~ troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine ~~he~~ shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of ~~the~~ sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle<sup>16</sup> shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin. Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season. Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.

6. But Job answered and said, Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.<sup>17</sup> For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set

15. perhaps a hedge of thorn.

16. tent.

17. A more literal translation of this

clause would read, "therefore have my words been rash." Job recognizes the exaggeration of his first outburst.

themselves in array against me. Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?<sup>18</sup> Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg? The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.<sup>19</sup> Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off! Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed<sup>20</sup> the words of the Holy One. What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life? Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass? Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?<sup>21</sup> To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty. My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away; which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid: what time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place. The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish. The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded because they had hoped;<sup>22</sup> they came thither, and were ashamed. For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid. Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance? or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty? Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forcible are right words! But what doth your arguing reprove? Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind? Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend. Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie. Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity;<sup>23</sup> yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.<sup>24</sup> Is there iniquity in my tongue? Cannot my taste discern perverse things?

7. Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling? As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow,<sup>25</sup> and as an hireling looketh for the reward of

18. Animals do not complain without reason; therefore when a rational man complains, he must have some justification for it.

19. more literally, "My soul refuseth to touch them, they are as loathsome meat to me." He is referring to the statements of his friends.

20. more literally, "denied."

21. more literally, "Is not my help within me gone, and is not wisdom driven quite away from me?"

22. The caravans reached the springs they had counted on and found them dry.

23. let there be no injustice.

24. my cause is righteous.

25. evening, the end of the working day.



his work: so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more. Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?<sup>26</sup> When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life. I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity. What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment? How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?<sup>27</sup> I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver<sup>28</sup> of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark<sup>29</sup> against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? For now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

8. Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind? Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice? If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression; if thou wouldest seek unto God betimes,<sup>30</sup> and make thy supplication to the Almighty; if thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase. For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thy self to the search of their fathers: (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)

26. Job, now addressing God directly, compares his situation with that of the sea monster whom a god fought against in the Babylonian myth. He reproves God for exerting His power against anything as small as himself.

27. even for a moment.

28. A more literal translation would read, "watcher."

29. target.

30. early.

shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart? Can the rush<sup>31</sup> grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish: whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure. He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden. His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones. If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee. Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow. Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers: till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing. They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought.

9. Then Job answered and said, I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.<sup>32</sup> He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number. Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not. Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou? If<sup>33</sup> God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him. How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him? Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge. If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice. For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause. He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness. If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead? If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would

31. the papyrus, which grows rapidly when the Nile is high, but withers at once when the waters go down.

32. one of a thousand questions.

33. In a more literal translation, *If* would be omitted.

despise my life.<sup>34</sup> This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent. The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not,<sup>35</sup> where, and who is he? Now my days are swifter than a post:<sup>36</sup> they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey. If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself: I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain? If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes abhor me.<sup>37</sup> For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman<sup>38</sup> betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both. Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me: then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me.

10. My soul is weary of my life; I will leave<sup>39</sup> my complaint upon<sup>40</sup> myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me. Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth?<sup>41</sup> Are thy days as the days of man? Are thy years as man's days,<sup>42</sup> that thou enquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin? Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand. Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? Hast thou not poured me out as milk and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee.<sup>43</sup> If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity. If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction; for it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion: and again thou shewest thy-

34. In a more literal translation this sentence would read, "I am perfect, I regard not myself. I despise my life."

35. if not he.

36. courier.

37. shall abhor me.

38. arbitrator.

39. give free course to.

40. on behalf of.

41. Are you capable of mistakes, of seeing as a man sees?

42. Is your time, like man's, short, so that you have to judge hastily?

43. The meaning is, "My destruction (this) is your purpose." Job accuses God of planning his destruction while showing favor to him.

self marvellous upon me. Thou renewest thy witnesses<sup>44</sup> against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me. Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave. Are not my days few? Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death: a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.

11. Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said, Should not the multitude of words be answered? And should a man full of talk be justified? Should thy lies make men hold their peace? And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed? For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; and that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is!<sup>45</sup> Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together,<sup>46</sup> then who can hinder him? For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it? For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt. If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear: because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away: and thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning. And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig<sup>47</sup> about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety. Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee. But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.

12. And Job answered and said, No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. But I have understanding as well as

44. his afflictions, which prove (to his friends) his guilt.

45. double to that which is: obscure in the original, usually taken to mean

simply "manifold," "various."

46. for judgment.

47. search. The master inspects his property before retiring.

you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these? I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answered him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn. He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease. The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly. But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat? With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding. With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding. Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth. With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his. He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools. He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle. He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty. He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty. He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death. He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth<sup>48</sup> them again. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way. They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.

13. Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it. What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you. Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God. But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value. O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom. Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips. Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him? Will ye accept<sup>49</sup> his person? Will ye contend for God? Is it good that he should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him? He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.<sup>50</sup> Shall not his excellency make

48. contracts their boundaries.

49. respect.

50. This phrase seems to mean something like, "back the winning side for personal reasons."

you afraid? and his dread fall upon you? Your remembrances<sup>51</sup> are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay. Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will. Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth,<sup>52</sup> and put my life in mine hand? Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him. Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears. Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified. Who is he that will plead with me?<sup>53</sup> for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.<sup>54</sup> Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from thee.<sup>55</sup> Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid. Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me. How many are mine iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sin. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy? Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble? For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess<sup>56</sup> the iniquities of my youth. Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon<sup>57</sup> the heels of my feet. And he,<sup>58</sup> as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that is moth eaten.

14. Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past,

51. memorable sayings.

52. like a wild beast at bay, defending its life with its teeth.

53. accuse me.

54. In a more literal translation this would read, "If anyone does accuse me

I shall hold my tongue and die."

55. He now addresses himself directly to God.

56. inherit.

57. drawest a line about.

58. the prisoner in the stocks, Job.

that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change<sup>59</sup> come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to<sup>60</sup> the work of thine hands. For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin? My transgression is scaled up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity. And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place. The waters wear the stones: thou wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man. Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away. His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them. But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

. . .

29. Moreover Job continued his parable, and said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me; when I washed my steps with butter and the rock poured me out rivers of oil; when I went out to the gate<sup>61</sup> through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand. My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand. Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide

59. release.

60. for.

61. The town meeting place and law court was just inside the gate.

as for the latter rain. If I laughed on them, they believed it not;<sup>62</sup> and the light of my countenance they cast not down. I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.

30. But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock. Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me,<sup>63</sup> in whom old age was perished? For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste. Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat. They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;) to dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks. Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together. They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth. And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face. Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me. Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction. They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.<sup>64</sup> They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me. Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud. And now my soul is poured out upon<sup>65</sup> me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me. My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest. By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat. He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes. I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not. Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me. Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance. For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living. Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.<sup>66</sup> Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor? When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness. My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction

62. obscure in the original; perhaps, "I smiled on them and they were confident."

63. They were too old to work.

64. *they have no helper*: The text is uncertain at this point.

65. within.

66. This sentence is unintelligible in the original.



tion prevented me.<sup>67</sup> I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation. I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ<sup>68</sup> into the voice of them that weep.

31. I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high? Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps? If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit; let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity. If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands; then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out. If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door; then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her. For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges. For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.

If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb? If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;) if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate;<sup>69</sup> then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone. For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure. If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; if I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand;<sup>70</sup> this also were an iniquity to be punished by the

67. came upon me.

68. pipe.

69. The gate is the court; the clause means, "when I had influence in the

court."

70. my heart . . . my hand: idolatrous acts of worship of the sun and moon.

judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.

If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him: neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul. If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! We cannot be satisfied.<sup>71</sup> The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller. If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom: did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door? Oh that one would hear me! Behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me. I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him. If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life: let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.

38. Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said. Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, and brake up for it my decreed place,<sup>72</sup> and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring<sup>73</sup> to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? It is turned as clay to the seal;<sup>74</sup> and they<sup>75</sup> stand as a garment. And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken. Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? Have the gates of death been opened unto

71. Translated literally, the statement of the men of the tabernacle should probably read, "Who can find one that hath not been satisfied with his flesh?" i.e., with meat from his flocks.

72. the broken coastline.

73. dawn.

74. A more literal translation would read, "changed as clay under the seal."

75. all things. God is describing the moment of the creation of the universe.

thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? Declare if thou knowest it all. Where is the way where light dwelleth? And as for darkness, where is the place thereof, that thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof? Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great? Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?<sup>76</sup> Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; to cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; to satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? Out of whose womb came the ice? And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth<sup>77</sup> in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are? Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart? Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven, when the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together? Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lion, when they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait? Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they<sup>78</sup> wander for lack of meat.

39. Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth? They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows. Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them. Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the

76. more literally, "and the east wind scattered upon the earth."

77. meaning disputed; it may be a

name for the signs of the zodiac, or for some particular constellation.

78. more literally, "and."

multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing. Will the unicorn<sup>79</sup> be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn? Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich? Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not her's: her labour is in vain without fear;<sup>80</sup> because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding. What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider. Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting. Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south? Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.

40. Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it.

Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an

79. a mythical beast with one horn in the center of his forehead. The Hebrew is less imaginative; it says,

"wild ox."

80. though her labor is in vain, she is without fear.

arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him. Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

Behold now behemoth,<sup>81</sup> which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stone<sup>82</sup> are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about. Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes:<sup>83</sup> his nose pierceth through snares.

41. Canst thou draw out leviathan<sup>84</sup> with an hook?<sup>85</sup> or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn? Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee? Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens? Shall the companions make a banquet of him? Shall they part him among the merchants? Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears? Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more. Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him? None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me? Who hath prevented<sup>86</sup> me, that I should repay him? Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine. I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion. Who can discover the face of<sup>87</sup> his garment?<sup>88</sup> or who can come to him with his double bridle? Who can open the doors of his face? His teeth are terrible round about. His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that

81. generally identified with the hippopotamus.

82. A more literal translation would read, "thighs."

83. obscure in the original; probably, "None can attack him in the eyes."

84. here probably the crocodile.

85. The Greek historian Herodotus tells how the Egyptians captured the crocodile with a hook.

86. given anything to me first.

87. strip off.

88. his scales.

no air can come between them. They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered. By his neesings<sup>89</sup> a light doth shine, and his cyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him. The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved. His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone. When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.<sup>90</sup> The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble. Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear. Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire. He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.<sup>91</sup> Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.

42. Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job. And

89. his breath (compare, "sneeze"). The vapor exhaled by the crocodile appears luminous in the sunlight.

90. a corrupt text. The clause probably should read, "in consternation they are beside themselves."

91. white (with foam).

the Lord turned to the captivity<sup>92</sup> of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.

*Psalms* 8

1. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.
2. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
3. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
5. For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.
6. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:
7. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;
8. The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
9. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

*Psalms* 19

1. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.
2. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.
3. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

92. changed the fortune.

4. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

5. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

8. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

10. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

12. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

13. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

14. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

*Psalms 23*

1. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

*Psalms 104*

1. Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

2. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

3. Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who



maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

4. Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

5. Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.

6. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

7. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

8. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

9. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

10. He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.

11. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

12. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.

13. He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

14. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food **out** of the earth;

15. And wine that maketh glad the heart of **man**, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengthneth **man's** heart.

16. The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

17. Where the birds make their nests: as **for** the stork, the fir trees are her house.

18. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.

19. He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

20. Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

21. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

22. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

23. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

25. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

27. These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

28. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

29. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

30. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

31. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works.

32. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

33. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.

35. Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord.

#### *Psalms 137*

1. By the rivers of Babylon,<sup>1</sup> there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

2. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

3. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

4. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

6. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

7. Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom<sup>2</sup> in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

8. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

9. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

1. on the river Euphrates. Jerusalem was captured and sacked by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The Jews were

taken away into captivity in Babylon. 2. The Edomites helped the Babylonians to capture Jerusalem.

[*The Song of the Suffering Servant*]\*

52:13. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

15. So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

53:1. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

2. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich<sup>1</sup> in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

11. He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he

\* Isaiah 52:13—53:12

1. Some editors emend the Hebrew to give the meaning, "evildoers."

comes from Zeus, who can tell why Poibos Apollo is so angry,  
 if for the sake of some vow, some hecatomb he blames us, 65  
 if given the fragrant smoke of lambs, of he goats, somehow  
 he can be made willing to beat the bane aside from us.'

He spoke thus and sat down again, and among them stood up  
 Kalchas, Thestor's son, far the best of the bird interpreters, 69  
 who knew all things that were, the things to come and the things  
 past,

who guided into the land of Ilion the ships of the Achaians  
 through that scercraft of his own that Phoibos Apollo gave him.  
 He in kind intention toward all stood forth and addressed them:  
 'You have bidden me, Achilleus beloved of Zeus, to explain to  
 you this anger of Apollo the lord who strikes from afar. Then 75  
 I will speak; yet make me a promise and swear before me  
 readily by word and work of your hands to defend me,  
 since I believe I shall make a man angry who holds great kingship  
 over the men of Argos, and all the Achaians obey him.  
 For a king when he is angry with a man beneath him is too strong,  
 and suppose even for the day itself he swallow down his anger, 81  
 he still keeps bitterness that remains until its fulfilment  
 deep in his chest. Speak forth then, tell me if you will protect me.'

Then in answer again spoke Achilleus of the swift feet:  
 'Speak, interpreting whatever you know, and fear nothing. 85  
 In the name of Apollo beloved of Zeus to whom you, Kalchas,  
 make your prayers when you interpret the gods' will to the Danaans,  
 no man so long as I am alive above earth and see daylight  
 shall lay the weight of his hands on you beside the hollow ships,  
 not one of all the Danaans, even if you mean Agamemnon, 90  
 who now claims to be far the greatest of all the Achaians.'

At this the blameless seer took courage again and spoke forth:  
 'No, it is not for the sake of some vow or hecatomb he blames us,  
 but for the sake of his priest whom Agamemnon dishonoured  
 and would not give him back his daughter nor accept the ransom.  
 Therefore the archer sent griefs against us and will send them 96  
 still, nor sooner thrust back the shameful plague from the Danaans  
 until we give the glancing-eyed girl back to her father  
 without price, without ransom, and lead also a blessed hecatomb  
 to Chryse; thus we might propitiate and persuade him.' 100

He spoke thus and sat down again, and among them stood up  
 Atreus' son the hero wide-ruling Agamemnon  
 raging, the heart within filled black to the brim with anger  
 from beneath, but his two eyes showed like fire in their blazing.  
 First of all he eyed Kalchas bitterly and spoke to him: 105

65. *hecatomb*: Strictly, the word denotes a sacrifice of a hundred animals,

but it is often used to refer to smaller offerings.

71. *Ilion*: Troy.

'Secr of evil: never yet have you told me a good thing.  
 Always the evil things are dear to your heart to prophesy,  
 but nothing excellent have you said nor ever accomplished.  
 Now once more you make divination to the Danaans, argue  
 forth your reason why he who strikes from afar afflicts them, 110  
 because I for the sake of the girl Chryseis would not take  
 the shining ransom; and indeed I wish greatly to have her  
 in my own house; since I like her better than Klytaimestra  
 my own wife, for in truth she is no way inferior,  
 neither in build nor stature nor wit, not in accomplishment. 115  
 Still I am willing to give her back, if such is the best way.  
 I myself desire that my people be safe, not perish.  
 Find me then some prize that shall be my own, lest I only  
 among the Argives go without, since that were unfitting;  
 you are all witnesses to this thing, that my prize goes elsewhere.'

Then in answer again spoke brilliant swift-footed Achilleus:  
 'Son of Atreus, most lordly, greediest for gain of all men,  
 how shall the great-hearted Achaians give you a prize now?  
 There is no great store of things lying about I know of.  
 But what we took from the cities by storm has been distributed; 125  
 it is unbecoming for the people to call back things once given.  
 No, for the present give the girl back to the god; we Achaians  
 thrice and four times over will repay you, if ever Zeus gives  
 into our hands the strong-walled citadel of Troy to be plundered.'

Then in answer again spoke powerful Agamemnon: 130  
 'Not that way, good fighter though you be, godlike Achilleus,  
 strive to cheat, for you will not deceive, you will not persuade me.  
 What do you want? To keep your own prize and have me sit here  
 lacking one? Are you ordering me to give this girl back?  
 Either the great-hearted Achaians shall give me a new prize 135  
 chosen according to my desire to atone for the girl lost,  
 or else if they will not give me one I myself shall take her,  
 your own prize, or that of Aias, or that of Odysseus,  
 going myself in person; and he whom I visit will be bitter.  
 Still, these are things we shall deliberate again hereafter. 140  
 Come, now, we must haul a black ship down to the bright sea,  
 and assemble rowers enough for it, and put on board it  
 the hecatomb, and the girl herself, Chryseis of the fair cheeks,  
 and let there be one responsible man in charge of her,  
 either Aias or Idomeneus or brilliant Odysseus, 145  
 or you yourself, son of Peleus, most terrifying of all men,  
 to reconcile by accomplishing sacrifice the archer.'

Then looking darkly at him Achilleus of the swift feet spoke:

138. *Aias*: Ajax, the bravest of the Greeks after Achilleus. *Odysseus*: the most subtle and crafty of the Greeks.

'O wrapped in shamelessness, with your mind forever on profit,  
 how shall any one of the Achaians readily obey you 150  
 either to go on a journey or to fight men strongly in battle?  
 I for my part did not come here for the sake of the Trojan  
 spearmen to fight against them, since to me they have done nothing.  
 Never yet have they driven away my cattle or my horses,  
 never in Phthia where the soil is rich and men grow great did they  
 spoil my harvest, since indeed there is much that lies between us, 156  
 the shadowy mountains and the echoing sea; but for your sake,  
 o great shamelessness, we followed, to do you favour,  
 you with the dog's eyes, to win your honour and Menelaos'  
 from the Trojans. You forget all this or else you care nothing. 160  
 And now my prize you threaten in person to strip from me,  
 for whom I laboured much, the gift of the sons of the Achaians.  
 Never, when the Achaians sack some well-founded citadel  
 of the Trojans, do I have a prize that is equal to your prize.  
 Always the greater part of the painful fighting is the work of 165  
 my hands; but when the time comes to distribute the booty  
 yours is far the greater reward, and I with some small thing  
 yet dear to me go back to my ships when I am weary with fighting.  
 Now I am returning to Phthia, since it is much better  
 to go home again with my curved ships, and I am minded no longer  
 to stay here dishonoured and pile up your wealth and your luxury.'

Then answered him in turn the lord of men Agamemnon: 172  
 'Run away by all means if your heart drives you. I will not  
 entreat you to stay here for my sake. There are others with me  
 who will do me honour, and above all Zeus of the counsels. 175  
 To me you are the most hateful of all the kings whom the gods love.  
 Forever quarrelling is dear to your heart, and wars and battles;  
 and if you are very strong indeed, that is a god's gift.  
 Go home then with your own ships and your own companions,  
 be king over the Myrmidons. I care nothing about you. 180  
 I take no account of your anger. But here is my threat to you.  
 Even as Phoibos Apollo is taking away my Chryseis.  
 I shall convey her back in my own ship, with my own  
 followers; but I shall take the fair-cheeked Briseis,  
 your prize, I myself going to your shelter, that you may learn well 185  
 how much greater I am than you, and another man may shrink back  
 from likening himself to me and contending against me.'

So he spoke. And the anger came on Peleus' son, and within  
 his shaggy breast the heart was divided two ways, pondering  
 whether to draw from beside his thigh the sharp sword, driving 190

155. *Phthia*: Achilles' home in northern Greece.

159. and *Menelaos*: The aim of the expedition was to recapture Helen, the

wife of Menelaos, who had run off to Troy with Priam's son Paris.

180. *Myrmidons*: the name of Achilles' people.

away all those who stood between and kill the son of Atreus,  
or else to check the spleen within and keep down his anger.  
Now as he weighed in mind and spirit these two courses  
and was drawing from its scabbard the great sword, Athene de-  
scended

from the sky. For Hera the goddess of the white arms sent her, 195  
who loved both men equally in her heart and cared for them.

The goddess standing behind Peleus' son caught him by the fair hair,  
appearing to him only, for no man of the others saw her.

Achilleus in amazement turned about, and straightway

knew Pallas Athene and the terrible eyes shining. 200

He uttered winged words and addressed her: 'Why have you come  
now,

o child of Zeus of the aegis, once more? Is it that you may see  
the outrageousness of the son of Atreus Agamemnon?

Yet will I tell you this thing, and I think it shall be accomplished.

By such acts of arrogance he may even lose his own life.' 205

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athene spoke to him:

'I have come down to stay your anger—but will you obey me?—

from the sky; and the goddess of the white arms Hera sent me,  
who loves both of you equally in her heart and cares for you. 209

Come then, do not take your sword in your hand, keep clear of  
fighting,

though indeed with words you may abuse him, and it will be that  
way.

And this also will I tell you and it will be a thing accomplished.

Some day three times over such shining gifts shall be given you  
by reason of this outrage. Hold your hand then, and obey us.'

Then in answer again spoke Achilleus of the swift feet: 215

'Goddess, it is necessary that I obey the word of you two,

angry though I am in my heart. So it will be better.

If any man obeys the gods, they listen to him also.'

He spoke, and laid his heavy hand on the silver sword hilt  
and thrust the great blade back into the scabbard nor disobeyed 220  
the word of Athene. And she went back again to Olympus  
to the house of Zeus of the aegis with the other divinities.

But Peleus' son once again in words of derision

spoke to Atreides, and did not yet let go of his anger:

'You wine sack, with a dog's eyes, with a deer's heart. Never 225  
once have you taken courage in your heart to arm with your people  
for battle, or go into ambushade with the best of the Achaians.

194. *Athene*: a goddess, daughter of Zeus, a patron of human ingenuity and resourcefulness, whether exemplified by handicrafts, such as spinning, or by skill in human relations, such as her favorite among the Greeks, Odysseus,

possessed. She supported the Greek side in the war.

202. *aegis*: a terrible shield with which Zeus (or any other god to whom it was entrusted) stirred up storms or threw panic into human beings.

No, for in such things you see death. Far better to your mind  
 is it, all along the widespread host of the Achaians  
 to take away the gifts of any man who speaks up against you. 236  
 King who feed on your people, since you rule nonentities;  
 otherwise, son of Atreus, this were your last outrage.  
 But I will tell you this and swear a great oath upon it:  
 in the name of this sceptre, which never again will bear leaf nor  
 branch, now that it has left behind the cut stump in the moun-  
 tains, 235

nor shall it ever blossom again, since the bronze blade stripped  
 bark and leafage, and now at last the sons of the Achaians  
 carry it in their hands in state when they administer  
 the justice of Zeus. And this shall be a great oath before you:  
 some day longing for Achilles will come to the sons of the  
 Achaians, 240  
 all of them. Then stricken at heart though you be, you will be able  
 to do nothing, when in their numbers before man-slaughtering  
 Hektor

they drop and die. And then you will eat out the heart within you  
 in sorrow, that you did no honour to the best of the Achaians.'

Thus spoke Pelcus' son and dashed to the ground the sceptre 245  
 studded with golden nails, and sat down again. But Atreides  
 raged still on the other side, and between them Nestor  
 the fair-spoken rose up, the lucid speaker of Pylos,  
 from whose lips the streams of words ran sweeter than honey.  
 In his time two generations of mortal men had perished, 250  
 those who had grown up with him and they who had been born to  
 these in sacred Pylos, and he was king in the third age.  
 He in kind intention toward both stood forth and addressed them:  
 'Oh, for shame. Great sorrow comes on the land of Achaia.  
 Now might Priam and the sons of Priam in truth be happy, 255  
 and all the rest of the Trojans be visited in their hearts with glad-  
 ness,

were they to hear all this wherein you two are quarrelling,  
 you, who surpass all Danaans in council, in fighting.  
 Yet be persuaded. Both of you are younger than I am.  
 Yes, and in my time I have dealt with better men than 260  
 you are, and never once did they disregard me. Never  
 yet have I seen nor shall see again such men as these were,  
 men like Peirithoös, and Dryas, shepherd of the people,  
 Kaineus and Exadios, godlike Polyphemos,  
 or Theseus, Aigeus' son, in the likeness of the immortals. 265  
 These were the strongest generation of earth-born mortals,

242. *Hektor*: son of Priam; the fore-  
 most warrior of the Trojans.

Agamemnon.

246. *Atreides*: son of Atreus, i.e.,

248. *Pylos*: on the western shore of  
 the Peloponnese.



the strongest, and they fought against the strongest, the beast men living within the mountains, and terribly they destroyed them.

I was of the company of these men, coming from Pylos,  
a long way from a distant land, since they had summoned me. 276

And I fought single-handed, yet against such men no one of the mortals now alive upon earth could do battle. And also these listened to the counsels I gave and heeded my bidding. Do you also obey, since to be persuaded is better.

You, great man that you are, yet do not take the girl away 275  
but let her be, a prize as the sons of the Achaians gave her first. Nor, son of Peleus, think to match your strength with the king, since never equal with the rest is the portion of honour of the sceptred king to whom Zeus gives magnificence. Even though you are the stronger man, and the mother who bore you was immortal, 280

yet is this man greater who is lord over more than you rule. Son of Atreus, give up your anger; even I entreat you to give over your bitterness against Achilles, he who stands as a great bulwark of battle over all the Achaians.'

Then in answer again spoke powerful Agamemnon: 285  
'Yes, old sir, all this you have said is fair and orderly. Yet here is a man who wishes to be above all others, who wishes to hold power over all, and to be lord of all, and give them their orders, yet I think one will not obey him. And if the everlasting gods have made him a spearman, 290  
yet they have not given him the right to speak abusively.'

Then looking at him darkly brilliant Achilles answered him:  
'So must I be called of no account and a coward  
if I must carry out every order you may happen to give me.  
Tell other men to do these things, but give me no more 295  
commands, since I for my part have no intention to obey you. And put away in your thoughts this other thing I tell you. With my hands I will not fight for the girl's sake, neither with you nor any other man, since you take her away who gave her. But of all the other things that are mine beside my fast black 300  
ship, you shall take nothing away against my pleasure. Come, then, only try it, that these others may see also; instantly your own black blood will stain my spearpoint.'

So these two after battling in words of contention stood up, and broke the assembly beside the ships of the Achaians. Peleus' son went back to his balanced ships and his shelter 306  
with Patroklos, Menoitios' son, and his own companions. But the son of Atreus drew a fast ship down to the water

280. *mother*: Achilles' mother was Thetis, a sea nymph. She was married to a mortal, Peleus (Achilles' father), but later left humankind and went to live with her father, Nereus, in the depths of the Aegean Sea.

and allotted into it twenty rowers and put on board it  
the hecatomb for the god and Chryseis of the fair cheeks 310  
leading her by the hand. And in charge went crafty Odysseus.

These then putting out went over the ways of the water  
while Atreus' son told his people to wash off their defilement.  
And they washed it away and threw the washings into the salt sea.  
Then they accomplished perfect hecatombs to Apollo, 315  
of bulls and goats along the beach of the barren salt sea.  
The savour of the burning swept in circles up to the bright sky.

Thus these were busy about the army. But Agamemnon  
did not give up his anger and the first threat he made to Achilles,  
but to Talthymbios he gave his orders and Eurybates 320  
who were heralds and hard-working henchmen to him: 'Go now  
to the shelter of Peleus' son Achilles, to bring back  
Briseis of the fair cheeks leading her by the hand. And if he  
will not give her, I must come in person to take her  
with many men behind me, and it will be the worse for him.' 325

He spoke and sent them forth with this strong order upon them.  
They went against their will beside the beach of the barren  
salt sea, and came to the shelters and the ships of the Myrmidons.  
The man himself they found beside his shelter and his black ship  
sitting. And Achilles took no joy at all when he saw them. 330  
These two terrified and in awe of the king stood waiting  
quietly, and did not speak a word at all nor question him.  
But he knew the whole matter in his own heart, and spoke first:  
'Welcome, heralds, messengers of Zeus and of mortals.  
Draw near. You are not to blame in my sight, but Agamemnon 335  
who sent the two of you here for the sake of the girl Briseis.  
Go then, illustrious Patroklos, and bring the girl forth  
and give her to these to be taken away. Yet let them be witnesses  
in the sight of the blessed gods, in the sight of mortal  
men, and of this cruel king, if ever hereafter 340  
there shall be need of me to beat back the shameful destruction  
from the rest. For surely in ruinous heart he makes sacrifice  
and has not wit enough to look behind and before him  
that the Achaians fighting beside their ships shall not perish.'

So he spoke, and Patroklos obeyed his beloved companion. 345  
He led forth from the hut Briseis of the fair cheeks and gave her  
to be taken away; and they walked back beside the ships of the  
Achaians,

and the woman all unwilling went with them still. But Achilles  
weeping went and sat in sorrow apart from his companions  
beside the beach of the grey sea looking out on the infinite water. 350  
Many times stretching forth his hands he called on his mother:  
'Since, my mother, you bore me to be a man with a short life,

therefore Zeus of the loud thunder on Olympus should grant me honour at least. But now he has given me not even a little.

Now the son of Atreus, powerful Agamemnon, 355  
has dishonoured me, since he has taken away my prize and keeps it.'

So he spoke in tears and the lady his mother heard him  
as she sat in the depths of the sea at the side of her aged father,  
and lightly she emerged like a mist from the grey water.  
She came and sat beside him as he wept, and stroked him 360  
with her hand and called him by name and spoke to him: 'Why  
then,

child, do you lament? What sorrow has come to your heart now?  
Tell me, do not hide it in your mind, and thus we shall both know.'

Sighing heavily Achilleus of the swift feet answered her:  
'You know; since you know why must I tell you all this? 365

We went against Thebe, the sacred city of Eëtion,  
and the city we sacked, and carried everything back to this place,  
and the sons of the Achaians made a fair distribution  
and for Atreus' son they chose out Chryseis of the fair cheeks.  
'Then Chryses, priest of him who strikes from afar, Apollo, 370  
came beside the fast ships of the bronze-armoured Achaians to  
ransom

back his daughter, carrying gifts beyond count and holding  
in his hands wound on a staff of gold the ribbons of Apollo  
who strikes from afar, and supplicated all the Achaians,  
but above all Atreus' two sons, the marshals of the people. 375

Then all the rest of the Achaians cried out in favour  
that the priest be respected and the shining ransom be taken;  
yet this pleased not the heart of Atreus' son Agamemnon,  
but harshly he sent him away with a strong order upon him.

'The old man went back again in anger, but Apollo 380  
listened to his prayer, since he was very dear to him, and let go  
the wicked arrow against the Argives. And now the people  
were dying one after another while the god's shafts ranged  
everywhere along the wide host of the Achaians, till the seer  
knowing well the truth interpreted the designs of the archer. 385

It was I first of all urged then the god's appeasement;  
and the anger took hold of Atreus' son, and in speed standing  
he uttered his threat against me, and now it is a thing accomplished.  
For the girl the glancing-eyed Achaians are taking to Chryse  
in a fast ship, also carrying to the king presents. But even 390  
now the heralds went away from my shelter leading  
Briseus' daughter, whom the sons of the Achaians gave me.  
You then, if you have power to, protect your own son, going

366. *Thebe*: a city in Trojan territory.

390. *the king*: Apollo.

to Olympos and supplicating Zeus, if ever before now  
 either by word you comforted Zeus' heart or by action. 395  
 Since it is many times in my father's halls I have heard you  
 making claims, when you said you only among the immortals  
 beat aside shameful destruction from Kronos' son the dark-misted,  
 that time when all the other Olympians sought to bind him,  
 Hera and Poseidon and Pallas Athene. Then you, 400  
 goddess, went and set him free from his shackles, summoning  
 in speed the creature of the hundred hands to tall Olympos,  
 that creature the gods name Briareus, but all men  
 Aigaios' son, but he is far greater in strength than his father.  
 He rejoicing in the glory of it sat down by Kronion, 405  
 and the rest of the blessed gods were frightened and gave up  
 binding him.

Sit beside him and take his knees and remind him of these things  
 now, if perhaps he might be willing to help the Trojans,  
 and pin the Achaians back against the ships and the water,  
 dying, so that thus they may all have profit of their own king, 410  
 that Atreus' son wide-ruling Agamemnon may recognize  
 his madness, that he did no honour to the best of the Achaians.'

Thetis answered him then letting the tears fall: 'Ah me,  
 my child. Your birth was bitterness. Why did I raise you?  
 If only you could sit by your ships untroubled, not weeping, 415  
 since indeed your lifetime is to be short, of no length.  
 Now it has befallen that your life must be brief and bitter  
 beyond all men's. To a bad destiny I bore you in my chambers.  
 But I will go to cloud-dark Olympos and ask this  
 thing of Zeus who delights in the thunder. Perhaps he will do it. 420  
 Do you therefore continuing to sit by your swift ships  
 be angry at the Achaians and stay away from all fighting.  
 For Zeus went to the blameless Aithiopians at the Ocean  
 yesterday to feast, and the rest of the gods went with him.  
 On the twelfth day he will be coming back to Olympos, 425  
 and then I will go for your sake to the house of Zeus, bronze-  
 founded,

and take him by the knees and I think I can persuade him.'

So speaking she went away from that place and left him  
 sorrowing in his heart for the sake of the fair-girdled woman  
 whom they were taking by force against his will. But Odysseus 430  
 meanwhile drew near to Chryse conveying the sacred hecatomb.

398. *Kronos' son*: Zeus. *dark-misted*: Zeus is the god of the sky, who brings rain and sunshine.

400. *Poseidon*: brother of Zeus; god of the sea.

402. *Briareus*: a giant, son of Poseidon.

405. *Kronion*: Zeus.

423. *Ocean*: the river which was believed to encircle the whole world. The Aithiopians (Ethiopians) were thought to live at the extreme edges of the world.

These when they were inside the many-hollowed harbour  
took down and gathered together the sails and stowed them in the  
black ship,

let down mast by the forestays, and settled it into the mast crutch  
easily, and rowed her in with oars to the mooring. 435

They threw over the anchor stones and made fast the stern cables  
and themselves stepped out on to the break of the sea beach,  
and led forth the hecatomb to the archer Apollo,  
and Chryseis herself stepped forth from the sea-going vessel.

Odysseus of the many designs guided her to the altar 440  
and left her in her father's arms and spoke a word to him:

'Chryses, I was sent here by the lord of men Agamemnon  
to lead back your daughter and accomplish a sacred hecatomb  
to Apollo on behalf of the Danaans, that we may propitiate  
the lord who has heaped unhappiness and tears on the Argives.' 445

He spoke, and left her in his arms. And he received gladly  
his beloved child. And the men arranged the sacred hecatomb  
for the god in orderly fashion around the strong-founded altar.  
Next they washed their hands and took up the scattering barley.  
Standing among them with lifted arms Chryses prayed in a great  
voice: 450

'Hear me, lord of the silver bow, who set your power about  
Chryse and Killa the sacrosanct, who are lord in strength over  
Tenedos; if once before you listened to my prayers  
and did me honour and smote strongly the host of the Achaians,  
so one more time bring to pass the wish that I pray for. 455  
Beat aside at last the shameful plague from the Danaans.'

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoibos Apollo heard him.  
And when all had made prayer and flung down the scattering barley  
first they drew back the victims' heads and slaughtered them and  
skinned them,

and cut away the meat from the thighs and wrapped them in fat, 460  
making a double fold, and laid shreds of flesh upon them.

The old man burned these on a cleft stick and poured the gleaming  
wine over, while the young men with forks in their hands stood  
about him.

But when they had burned the thigh pieces and tasted the vitals,  
they cut all the remainder into pieces and spitted them 465  
and roasted all carefully and took off the pieces.

Then after they had finished the work and got the feast ready  
they feasted, nor was any man's hunger denied a fair portion.

But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking,  
the young men filled the mixing bowls with pure wine, passing  
a portion to all, when they had offered drink in the goblets. 470

All day long they propitiated the god with singing,

chanting a splendid hymn to Apollo, these young Achaians,  
singing to the one who works from afar, who listened in gladness.

Afterwards when the sun went down and darkness came on-  
ward 475

they lay down and slept beside the ship's stern cables.

But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,  
they put forth to sea toward the wide camp of the Achaians.

And Apollo who works from afar sent them a favouring stern wind.

They set up the mast again and spread on it the white sails, 480  
and the wind blew into the middle of the sail, and at the cutwater  
a blue wave rose and sang strongly as the ship went onward.

She ran swiftly cutting across the swell her pathway.

But when they had come back to the wide camp of the Achaians  
they hauled the black ship up on the mainland, high up 485  
on the sand, and underneath her they fixed the long props.

Afterwards they scattered to their own ships and their shelters.

But that other still sat in anger beside his swift ships,  
Peleus' son divinely born, Achilles of the swift feet.

Never now would he go to assemblies where men win glory, 490  
never more into battle, but continued to waste his heart out  
sitting there, though he longed always for the clamour and fighting.

But when the twelfth dawn after this day appeared, the gods who  
live forever came back to Olympus all in a body  
and Zeus led them; nor did Thetis forget the entreaties 495

of her son, but she emerged from the sea's waves early  
in the morning and went up to the tall sky and Olympus.

She found Kronos' broad-browed son apart from the others  
sitting upon the highest peak of rugged Olympus.

She came and sat beside him with her left hand embracing 500  
his knees, but took him underneath the chin with her right hand  
and spoke in supplication to lord Zeus son of Kronos:

'Father Zeus, if ever before in word or action

I did you favour among the immortals, now grant what I ask for.

Now give honour to my son short-lived beyond all other 505  
mortals. Since even now the lord of men Agamemnon  
dishonours him, who has taken away his prize and keeps it.

Zeus of the counsels, lord of Olympus, now do him honour.

So long put strength into the Trojans, until the Achaians  
give my son his rights, and his honour is increased among them.' 510

She spoke thus. But Zeus who gathers the clouds made no answer  
but sat in silence a long time. And Thetis, as she had taken  
his knees, clung fast to them and urged once more her question:

'Bend your head and promise me to accomplish this thing,

500-501. *embracing his knees* . . .  
*chm*: the posture of the suppliant, who  
by this physical pressure emphasized his

desperation and the urgency of the re-  
quest. Zeus was above all other gods  
the protector of suppliants.

or else refuse it, you have nothing to fear, that I may know  
by how much I am the most dishonoured of all gods.' 515

Deeply disturbed Zeus who gathers the clouds answered her:

'This is a disastrous matter when you set me in conflict  
with Hera, and she troubles me with recriminations.

Since even as things are, forever among the immortals  
she is at me and speaks of how I help the Trojans in battle. 520

Even so, go back again now, go away, for fear she  
see us. I will look to these things that they be accomplished.

See then, I will bend my head that you may believe me.

For this among the immortal gods is the mightiest witness  
I can give, and nothing I do shall be vain nor revocable  
nor a thing unfulfilled when I bend my head in assent to it.' 525

He spoke, the son of Kronos, and nodded his head with the dark  
brows,

and the immortally anointed hair of the great god  
swept from his divine head, and all Olympos was shaken. 530

So these two who had made their plans separated, and Thetis  
leapt down again from shining Olympos into the sea's depth,  
but Zeus went back to his own house, and all the gods rose up  
from their chairs to greet the coming of their father, not one had  
courage

to keep his place as the father advanced, but stood up to greet  
him. 535

Thus he took his place on the throne; yet Hera was not  
ignorant, having seen how he had been plotting counsels  
with Thetis the silver-footed, the daughter of the sea's ancient,  
and at once she spoke revilingly to Zeus son of Kronos:

'Treacherous one, what god has been plotting counsels with you? 540

Always it is dear to your heart in my absence to think of  
secret things and decide upon them. Never have you patience  
frankly to speak forth to me the thing that you purpose.'

Then to her the father of gods and men made answer:

'Hera, do not go on hoping that you will hear all my  
thoughts, since these will be too hard for you, though you are my  
wife. 545

Any thought that it is right for you to listen to, no one  
neither man nor any immortal shall hear it before you.

But anything that apart from the rest of the gods I wish to  
plan, do not always question each detail nor probe me.' 550

Then the goddess the ox-eyed lady Hera answered:

'Majesty, son of Kronos, what sort of thing have you spoken?  
Truly too much in time past I have not questioned nor probed you,  
but you are entirely free to think out whatever pleases you.

Now, though, I am terribly afraid you were won over  
by Thetis the silver-footed, the daughter of the sea's ancient. 555  
For early in the morning she sat beside you and took your  
knees, and I think you bowed your head in assent to do honour  
to Achilles, and to destroy many beside the ships of the Achaians.'

Then in return Zeus who gathers the clouds made answer: 560  
'Dear lady, I never escape you, you are always full of suspicion.  
Yet thus you can accomplish nothing surely, but be more  
distant from my heart than ever, and it will be the worse for you.  
If what you say is true, then that is the way I wish it.  
But go then, sit down in silence, and do as I tell you, 565  
for fear all the gods, as many as are on Olympos, can do nothing  
if I come close and lay my unconquerable hands upon you.'

He spoke, and the goddess the ox-eyed lady Hera was frightened  
and went and sat down in silence wrenching her heart to obedience,  
and all the Uranian gods in the house of Zeus were troubled. 570  
Hephaistos the renowned smith rose up to speak among them,  
to bring comfort to his beloved mother, Hera of the white arms:  
'This will be a disastrous matter and not endurable  
if you two are to quarrel thus for the sake of mortals  
and bring brawling among the gods. There will be no pleasure 575  
in the stately feast at all, since vile things will be uppermost.  
And I entreat my mother, though she herself understands it,  
to be ingratiating toward our father Zeus, that no longer  
our father may scold her and break up the quiet of our feasting.  
For if the Olympian who handles the lightning should be 580  
minded to hurl us out of our places, he is far too strong for any.  
Do you therefore approach him again with words made gentle,  
and at once the Olympian will be gracious again to us.'

He spoke, and springing to his feet put a two-handled goblet  
into his mother's hands and spoke again to her once more: 585  
'Have patience, my mother, and endure it, though you be saddened,  
for fear that, dear as you are, I see you before my own eyes  
struck down, and then sorry though I be I shall not be able  
to do anything. It is too hard to fight against the Olympian.  
There was a time once before now I was minded to help you, 590  
and he caught me by the foot and threw me from the magic  
threshold,

and all day long I dropped helpless, and about sunset  
I landed in Lemnos, and there was not much life left in me.  
After that fall it was the Sintian men who took care of me.'

570. *Uranian*: The Greek word *ouranos* means "sky," "heaven."

571. *Hephaistos*: the patron god of craftsmen, especially workers in metal.

593. *Lemnos*: an island in the Aegean Sea.

594. *Sintian men*: the ancient inhabitants of Lemnos.



He spoke, and the goddess of the white arms Hera smiled at him, 395

and smiling she accepted the goblet out of her son's hand. Thereafter beginning from the left he poured drinks for the other gods, dipping up from the mixing bowl the sweet nectar. But among the blessed immortals uncontrollable laughter went up as they saw Hephaistos bustling about the palace. 600

Thus thereafter the whole day long until the sun went under they feasted, nor was anyone's hunger denied a fair portion, nor denied the beautifully wrought lyre in the hands of Apollo nor the antiphonal sweet sound of the Muses singing.

Afterwards when the light of the flaming sun went under 605 they went away each one to sleep in his home where for each one the far-renowned strong-handed Hephaistos had built a house by means of his craftsmanship and cunning. Zeus the Olympian and lord of the lightning went to his own bed, where always he lay when sweet sleep came on him 610 Going up to the bed he slept and Hera of the gold throne beside him.

[The Greeks, in spite of Achilles' withdrawal, continued to fight. They did not suffer immoderately from Achilles' absence; on the contrary, they pressed the Trojans so hard that Hektor, the Trojan leader, after rallying his men, returned to the city to urge the Trojans to offer special prayers and sacrifices to the gods.]

### Book VI

. . . Now as Hektor had come to the ~~Skaian~~ gates and the oak tree, 240 all the wives of the Trojans and their daughters came running about him to ask after their sons, after their brothers and neighbours, their husbands; and he told them to pray to the immortals, 245 all, in turn; but there were sorrows in store for many.

Now he entered the wonderfully built palace of Priam. This was fashioned with smooth-stone cloister walks, and within it were embodied fifty sleeping chambers of smoothed stone built so as to connect with each other; and within these slept 245 each beside his own wedded wife, the sons of Priam. In the same inner court on the opposite side, to face these, lay the twelve close smooth-stone sleeping chambers of his daughters built so as to connect with each other; and within these slept, each by his own modest wife, the lords of the daughters of Priam. 250

598. *nectar*: the drink of the gods.

237. *Skaian gates*: one of the entrances to Troy.

There there came to meet Hektor his bountiful mother  
 with Laodike, the loveliest looking of all her daughters.  
 She clung to his hand and called him by name and spoke to him:  
 'Why then,

child, have you come here and left behind the bold battle?  
 Surely it is these accursed sons of the Achaians who wear you #55  
 out, as they fight close to the city, and the spirit stirred you  
 to return, and from the peak of the citadel lift your hands, praying  
 to Zeus. But stay while I bring you honey-sweet wine, to pour out  
 a libation to father Zeus and the other immortals  
 first, and afterwards if you will drink yourself, be strengthened. 260  
 In a tired man, wine will bring back his strength to its bigness,  
 in a man tired as you are tired, defending your neighbours.'

Tall Hektor of the shining helm spoke to her answering:  
 'My honoured mother, lift not to me the kindly sweet wine,  
 for fear you stagger my strength and make me forget my courage; 265  
 and with hands unwashed I would take shame to pour the glittering  
 wine to Zeus; there is no means for a man to pray to the dark-misted  
 son of Kronos, with blood and muck all spattered upon him.  
 But go yourself to the temple of the spoiler Athene,  
 assembling the ladies of honour, and with things to be sacrificed, 270  
 and take a robe, which seems to you the largest and loveliest  
 in the great house, and that which is far your dearest possession.  
 Lay this along the knees of Athene the lovely haired. Also  
 promise to dedicate within the shrine twelve heifers,  
 yearlings, never broken, if only she will have pity 275  
 on the town of Troy, and the Trojan wives, and their innocent  
 children,  
 if she will hold back from sacred Ilion the son of Tydeus,  
 that wild spear-fighter, the strong one who drives men to thoughts  
 of terror.

So go yourself to the temple of the spoiler Athene,  
 while I go in search of Paris, to call him, if he will listen 280  
 to anything I tell him. How I wish at this moment the earth might  
 open beneath him. The Olympian let him live, a great sorrow  
 to the Trojans, and high-hearted Priam, and all of his children.  
 If only I could see him gone down to the house of the Death God,  
 then I could say my heart had forgotten its joyless affliction.' 285

So he spoke, and she going into the great house called out  
 to her handmaidens, who assembled throughout the city the  
 highborn

women; while she descended into the fragrant store-chamber.  
 There lay the elaborately wrought robes, the work of Sidonian

251. *mother*: Hekabe (Hecuba).

277. *son of Tydeus*: Diomedes, one  
 of the Greek champions, who has just

distinguished himself in the fighting.

289. *Sidonian*: Sidon was a Phoeni-  
 cian city on the coast of Palestine.

women, whom Alexandros himself, the godlike, had brought home 290

from the land of Sidon, crossing the wide sea, on that journey when he brought back also gloriously descended Helen.

Hekabe lifted out one and took it as gift to Athene, that which was the loveliest in design and the largest, and shone like a star. It lay beneath the others. She went on 295 her way, and a throng of noble women hastened about her.

When these had come to Athene's temple on the peak of the citadel,

Theano of the fair cheeks opened the door for them, daughter of Kisseus, and wife of Antenor, breaker of horses, she whom the Trojans had established to be Athene's priestess. 300

With a wailing cry all lifted up their hands to Athene, and Theano of the fair cheeks taking up the robe laid it along the knees of Athene the lovely haired, and praying she supplicated the daughter of powerful Zeus: 'O lady, Athene, our city's defender, shining among goddesses: 305

break the spear of Diomedes, and grant that the man be hurled on his face in front of the Skaian gates; so may we instantly dedicate within your shrine twelve heifers, yearlings, never broken, if only you will have pity on the town of Troy, and the Trojan wives, and their innocent children.' 310

She spoke in prayer, but Pallas Athene turned her head from her.

So they made their prayer to the daughter of Zeus the powerful.

But Hektor went away to the house of Alexandros, a splendid place he had built himself, with the men who at that time were the best men for craftsmanship in the generous Troad, 315 who had made him a sleeping room and a hall and a courtyard near the houses of Hektor and Priam, on the peak of the citadel.

There entered Hektor beloved of Zeus, in his hand holding the eleven-cubit-long spear, whose shaft was tipped with a shining bronze spearhead, and a ring of gold was hooped to hold it. 320

He found the man in his chamber busy with his splendid armour, the corselet and the shield, and turning in his hands the curved bow, while Helen of Argos was sitting among her attendant women directing the magnificent work done by her handmaidens.

But Hektor saw him, and in words of shame he rebuked him: 325 'Strange man! It is not fair to keep in your heart this coldness.

290. *Alexandros*: another name for Paris.

319. *eleven-cubit-long*: The Greek word translated as "cubit" means "the length of the forearm."

325. *rebuked him*: Paris, like Achilles, was sulking at home. He had been

worsted in a duel with Menelaos, but the goddess Aphrodite saved him from the consequences of his defeat and brought him to his house in Troy. Paris was hated by his countrymen as the cause of the war.

The people are dying around the city and around the steep wall as they fight hard; and it is for you that this war with its clamour has flared up about our city. You yourself would fight with another whom you saw anywhere hanging back from the hateful encounter.

Up then, to keep our town from burning at once in the hot fire.' 330

Then in answer the godlike Alexandros spoke to him:

'Hektor, seeing you have scolded me rightly, not beyond measure, therefore I will tell, and you in turn understand and listen.

It was not so much in coldness and bitter will toward the Trojans 335 that I sat in my room, but I wished to give myself over to sorrow.

But just now with soft words my wife was winning me over and urging me into the fight, and that way seems to me also the better one. Victory passes back and forth between men.

Come then, wait for me now while I put on my armour of battle, 340 or go, and I will follow, and I think I can overtake you.'

He spoke, but Hektor of the shining helm gave him no answer, but Helen spoke to him in words of endearment: 'Brother by marriage to me, who am a nasty bitch evil-intriguing, how I wish that on that day when my mother first bore me 345 the foul whirlwind of the storm had caught me away and swept me to the mountain, or into the wash of the sea deep-thundering where the waves would have swept me away before all these things had happened.

Yet since the gods had brought it about that these vile things must be,

I wish I had been the wife of a better man than this is, 350 one who knew modesty and all things of shame that men say.

But this man's heart is no steadfast thing, nor yet will it be so ever hereafter; for that I think he shall take the consequence.

But come now, come in and rest on this chair, my brother, since it is on your heart beyond all that the hard work has fallen 355 for the sake of dishonoured me and the blind act of Alexandros, us two, on whom Zeus set a vile destiny, so that hereafter we shall be made into things of song for the men of the future.'

Then tall Hektor of the shining helm answered her: 'Do not, Helen,

make me sit with you, though you love me. You will not persuade me. 360

Already my heart within is hastening me to defend the Trojans, who when I am away long greatly to have me. Rather rouse this man, and let himself also be swift to action so he may overtake me while I am still in the city.

For I am going first to my own house, so I can visit 365 my own people, my beloved wife and my son, who is little,

since I do not know if ever again I shall come back this way,  
or whether the gods will strike me down at the hands of the  
Achaïans.'

So speaking Hektor of the shining helm departed  
and in speed made his way to his own well-established dwelling, 370  
but failed to find in the house Andromache of the white arms;  
for she, with the child, and followed by one fair-robed attendant,  
had taken her place on the tower in lamentation, and tearful.  
When he saw no sign of his perfect wife within the house, Hektor  
stopped in his way on the threshold and spoke among the hand-  
maidens: 375

'Come then, tell me truthfully as you may, handmaidens:  
where has Andromache of the white arms gone? Is she  
with any of the sisters of her lord or the wives of his brothers?  
Or has she gone to the house of Athens, where all the other  
lovely-haired women of Troy propitiate the grim goddess?' 380

Then in turn the hard-working housekeeper gave him an answer:  
'Hektor, since you have urged me to tell you the truth, she is not  
with any of the sisters of her lord or the wives of his brothers,  
nor has she gone to the house of Athens, where all the other  
lovely-haired women of Troy propitiate the grim goddess, 385  
but she has gone to the great bastion of Ilion, because she heard that  
the Trojans were losing, and great grew the strength of the Achaïans.  
Therefore she has gone in speed to the wall, like a woman  
gone mad, and a nurse attending her carries the baby.'

So the housekeeper spoke, and Hektor hastened from his home 390  
backward by the way he had come through the well-laid streets. So  
as he had come to the gates on his way through the great city,  
the Skaian gates, whereby he would issue into the plain, there  
at last his own generous wife came running to meet him,  
Andromache, the daughter of high-hearted Eëtion; 395  
Eëtion, who had dwelt underneath wooded Plakos,  
in Thebe below Plakos, lord over the Kilikian people.

It was his daughter who was given to Hektor of the bronze helm.  
She came to him there, and beside her went an attendant carrying  
the boy in the fold of her bosom, a little child, only a baby, 400  
Hektor's son, the admired, beautiful as a star shining,  
whom Hektor called Skamandrios, but all of the others  
Astyanax—lord of the city; since Hektor alone saved Ilion.  
Hektor smiled in silence as he looked on his son, but she,  
Andromache, stood close beside him, letting her tears fall, 405  
and clung to his hand and called him by name and spoke to him:  
'Dearest,

402. *Skamandrios*: after the Trojan  
river Skamander.

403. *Astyanax*: The name does lit-  
erally mean "lord of the city."

your own great strength will be your death, and you have no pity  
on your little son, nor on me, ill-starred, who soon must be your  
widow;

for presently the Achaians, gathering together,  
will set upon you and kill you; and for me it would be far better 410  
to sink into the earth when I have lost you, for there is no other  
consolation for me after you have gone to your destiny—  
only grief; since I have no father, no honoured mother.

It was brilliant Achilles who slew my father, Eëtion,  
when he stormed the strong-founded citadel of the Kilikians, 415  
Thebe of the towering gates. He killed Eëtion  
but did not strip his armour, for his heart respected the dead man,  
but burned the body in all its elaborate war-gear  
and piled a grave mound over it, and the nymphs of the mountains,  
daughters of Zeus of the aegis, planted elm trees about it. 420

And they who were my seven brothers in the great house all went  
upon a single day down into the house of the death god,  
for swift-footed brilliant Achilles slaughtered all of them  
as they were tending their white sheep and their lumbering oxen;  
and when he had led my mother, who was queen under wooded  
Plakos, 425

here, along with all his other possessions, Achilles  
released her again, accepting ransom beyond count, but Artemis  
of the showering arrows struck her down in the halls of her father.  
Hektor, thus you are father to me, and my honoured mother,  
you are my brother, and you it is who are my young husband. 430  
Please take pity upon me then, stay here on the rampart,  
that you may not leave your child an orphan, your wife a widow,  
but draw your people up by the fig tree, there where the city  
is openest to attack, and where the wall may be mounted.  
Three times their bravest came that way, and fought there to storm  
it 435

about the two Aiantes and renowned Idomeneus,  
about the two Atreidai and the fighting son of Tydeus.  
Either some man well skilled in prophetic arts had spoken,  
or the very spirit within themselves had stirred them to the  
onslaught.'

Then tall Hektor of the shining helm answered her: 'All these 440  
things are in my mind also, lady; yet I would feel deep shame  
before the Trojans, and the Trojan women with trailing garments,  
if like a coward I were to shrink aside from the fighting;  
and the spirit will not let me, since I have learned to be valiant

427. *Artemis*: a virgin goddess, dispenser of natural and painless death to women.

436. *Aiantes*: There were two Greek warriors called Aias (Ajax). *Idomeneus*: a hero from Crete.

437. *Atreidai*: the sons of Atreus.

and to fight always among the foremost ranks of the Trojans, 445  
 winning for my own self great glory, and for my father.  
 For I know this thing well in my heart, and my mind knows it:  
 there will come a day when sacred Ilion shall perish,  
 and Priam, and the people of Priam of the strong ash spear.  
 But it is not so much the pain to come of the Trojans 450  
 that troubles me, not even of Priam the king nor Hekabe,  
 not the thought of my brothers who in their numbers and valour  
 shall drop in the dust under the hands of men who hate them,  
 as troubles me the thought of you, when some bronze-armoured  
 Achaian leads you off, taking away your day of liberty, 455  
 in tears; and in Argos you must work at the loom of another,  
 and carry water from the spring Messcis or Hypereia,  
 all unwilling, but strong will be the necessity upon you;  
 and some day seeing you shedding tears a man will say of you:  
 "This is the wife of Iktor, who was ever the bravest fighter 460  
 of the Trojans, breakers of horses, in the days when they fought  
 about Ilion."

So will one speak of you; and for you it will be yet a fresh grief,  
 to be widowed of such a man who could fight off the day of your  
 slavery.

But may I be dead and the piled earth hide me under before I  
 hear you crying and know by this that they drag you captive.' 465

So speaking glorious Hektor held out his arms to his baby,  
 who shrank back to his fair-girdled nurse's bosom  
 screaming, and frightened at the aspect of his own father,  
 terrified as he saw the bronze and the crest with its horse-hair,  
 nodding dreadfully, as he thought, from the peak of the helmet. 470  
 Then his beloved father laughed out, and his honoured mother,  
 and at once glorious Hektor lifted from his head the helmet  
 and laid it in all its shining upon the ground. Then taking  
 up his dear son he tossed him about in his arms, and kissed him,  
 and lifted his voice in prayer to Zeus and the other immortals: 475  
 'Zeus, and you other immortals, grant that this boy, who is my son,  
 may be as I am, pre-eminent among the Trojans,  
 great in strength, as am I, and rule strongly over Ilion;  
 and some day let them say of him: "He is better by far than his  
 father",

as he comes in from the fighting; and let him kill his enemy 480  
 and bring home the blooded spoils, and delight the heart of his  
 mother.'

So speaking he set his child again in the arms of his beloved  
 wife, who took him back again to her fragrant bosom  
 smiling in her tears; and her husband saw, and took pity upon her,

and stroked her with his hand, and called her by name and spoke to her: 485

'Poor Andromache! Why does your heart sorrow so much for me? No man is going to hurl me to Hades, unless it is fated, but as for fate, I think that no man yet has escaped it once it has taken its first form, neither brave man nor coward. Go therefore back to our house, and take up your own work, 490 the loom and the distaff, and see to it that your handmaidens ply their work also; but the men must see to the fighting, all men who are the people of Ilion, but I beyond others.'

So glorious Hektor spoke and again took up the helmet with its crest of horse-hair, while his beloved wife went home-ward, 495

turning to look back on the way, letting the live tears fall. And as she came in speed into the well-settled household of Hektor the slayer of men, she found numbers of handmaidens within, and her coming stirred all of them into lamentation. So they mourned in his house over Hektor while he was living 500 still, for they thought he would never again come back from the fighting

alive, escaping the Achaian hands and their violence.

But Paris in turn did not linger long in his high house, but when he had put on his glorious armour with bronze elaborate he ran in the confidence of his quick feet through the city. 505 As when some stalled horse who has been corn-fed at the manger breaking free of his rope gallops over the plain in thunder to his accustomed bathing place in a sweet-running river and in the pride of his strength holds high his head, and the mane floats

over his shoulders; sure of his glorious strength, the quick knees 510 carry him to the loved places and the pasture of horses; so from uttermost Pergamos came Paris, the son of Priam, shining in all his armour of war as the sun shines, laughing aloud, and his quick feet carried him; suddenly thereafter he came on brilliant Hektor, his brother, where he yet lingered 515 before turning away from the place where he had talked with his lady.

It was Alexandros the godlike who first spoke to him: 'Brother, I fear that I have held back your haste, by being slow on the way, not coming in time, as you commanded me.'

Then tall Hektor of the shining helm spoke to him in answer: 520 'Strange man! There is no way that one, giving judgment in fairness, could dishonour your work in battle, since you are a strong man. But of your own accord you hang back, unwilling. And my heart

512. *Pergamos*: the citadel of Troy.



is grieved in its thought, when I hear shameful things spoken about  
you

by the Trojans, who undergo hard fighting for your sake. 525  
Let us go now; some day hereafter we will make all right  
with the immortal gods in the sky, if Zeus ever grant it,  
setting up to them in our houses the wine-bowl of liberty  
after we have driven out of Troy the strong-greaved Achaians.'

[The Trojans rallied successfully and went over to the offensive.  
They drove the Greeks back to the light fortifications they had built  
around their beached ships. The Trojans lit their watchfires on the  
plain, ready to deliver the attack in the morning.]

*Book VIII*

. . . So with hearts made high these sat night-long by the out-  
works  
of battle, and their watchfires blazed numerous about them.  
As when in the sky the stars about the moon's shining 555  
are seen in all their glory, when the air has fallen to stillness,  
and all the high places of the hills are clear, and the shoulders out-  
jutting,  
and the deep ravines, as endless bright air spills from the heavens  
and all the stars are seen, to make glad the heart of the shepherd;  
such in their numbers blazed the watchfires the Trojans were  
burning 560  
between the waters of Xanthos and the ships, before Ilion.  
A thousand fires were burning there in the plain, and beside each  
one sat fifty men in the flare of the blazing firelight.  
And standing each beside his chariot, championing white barley  
and oats, the horses waited for the dawn to mount to her high  
place. 565

*Book IX*

So the Trojans held their night watches. Meanwhile immortal  
Panic, companion of cold Terror, gripped the Achaians  
as all their best were stricken with grief that passes endurance.  
As two winds rise to shake the sea where the fish swarm, Boreas  
and Zephyros, north wind and west, that blow from Thraceward, 5  
suddenly descending, and the darkened water is gathered  
to crests, and far across the salt water scatters the seaweed;  
so the heart in the breast of each Achaian was troubled.

And the son of Atreus, stricken at heart with the great sorrow,  
went among his heralds the clear-spoken and told them 10  
to summon calling by name each man into the assembly  
but with no outcry, and he himself was at work with the foremost.

They took their seats in assembly, dispirited, and Agamemnon stood up before them, shedding tears, like a spring dark-running that down the face of a rock impassable drips its dim water. 15

So, groaning heavily, Agamemnon spoke to the Argives:

'Friends, who are leaders of the Argives and keep their counsel:

Zeus son of Kronos has caught me badly in bitter futility.

He is hard: who before this time promised me and consented that I might sack strong-walled Ilion and sail homeward. 20

Now he has devised a vile deception and bids me go back to Argos in dishonour having lost many of my people.

Such is the way it will be pleasing to Zeus, who is too strong, who before now has broken the crests of many cities and will break them again, since his power is beyond all others. 25

Come then, do as I say, let us all be won over; let us run away with our ships to the beloved land of our fathers since no longer now shall we capture Troy of the wide ways.'

So he spoke, and all of them stayed stricken to silence.

For some time the sons of the Achaians said nothing in sorrow: but at long last Diomedes of the great war cry addressed them: 30

'Son of Atreus: I will be first to fight with your folly,

as is my right, lord, in this assembly; then do not be angered.

I was the first of the Danaans whose valour you slighted and said I was unwarlike and without courage. The young men 35 of the Argives know all these things, and the elders know it.

The son of devious-devising Kronos has given you gifts in two ways: with the sceptre he gave you honour beyond all, but he did not give you a heart, and of all power this is the greatest.

Sir, sir, can you really believe the sons of the Achaians are so unwarlike and so weak of their hearts as you call them? 40

But if in truth your own heart is so set upon going, go. The way is there, and next to the water are standing your ships that came—so many of them!—with you from Mykenai, and yet the rest of the flowing-haired Achaians will stay here 45

until we have sacked the city of Troy; let even these also run away with their ships to the beloved land of their fathers, still we two, Sthenclos and I, will fight till we witness the end of Ilion; for it was with God that we made our way hither.'

So he spoke, and all the sons of the Achaians shouted 50 acclaim for the word of Diomedes, breaker of horses.

And now Nestor the horseman stood forth among them and spoke to them:

'Son of Tydeus, beyond others you are strong in battle, and in counsel also are noblest among all men of your own age.

34-35. *I was . . . courage*: This happened during Agamemnon's review of his forces before the battle.

Not one man of all the Achaians will belittle your words nor 55  
 speak against them. Yet you have not made complete your argument,  
 since you are a young man still and could even be my own son  
 and my youngest born of all; yet still you argue in wisdom  
 with the Argive kings, since all you have spoken was spoken fairly.  
 But let me speak, since I can call myself older than you are, 60  
 and go through the whole matter, since there is none who can  
 dishonour

the thing I say, not even powerful Agamemnon.

Out of all brotherhood, outlawed, homeless shall be that man  
 who longs for all the horror of fighting among his own people.  
 But now let us give way to the darkness of night, and let us 65  
 make ready our evening meal; and let the guards severally  
 take their stations by the ditch we have dug outside the ramparts.  
 This I would enjoin upon our young men; but thereafter  
 do you, son of Atreus, take command, since you are our kingliest.  
 Divide a feast among the princes; it befits you, it is not 70  
 unbecoming. Our shelters are filled with wine that the Achaian  
 ships carry day by day from Thrace across the wide water.

All hospitality is for you; you are lord over many.

When many assemble together follow him who advises  
 the best counsel, for in truth there is need for all the Achaians 75  
 of good close counsel, since now close to our ships the enemy  
 burn their numerous fires. What man could be cheered to see this?  
 Here is the night that will break our army, or else will preserve it.'

So he spoke, and they listened hard to him, and obeyed him,  
 and the sentries went forth rapidly in their armour, gathering 80  
 about Nestor's son Thrasymedes, shepherd of the people,  
 and about Askalaphos and Ialmenos, sons both of Arcs,  
 about Meriones and Aphareus and Deïpyros  
 and about the son of Kreion, Lykomedes the brilliant.

There were seven leaders of the sentinels, and with each one a  
 hundred 85

fighting men followed gripping in their hands the long spears.  
 They took position in the space between the ditch and the rampart,  
 and there they kindled their fires and each made ready his supper.

But the son of Atreus led the assembled lords of the Achaians  
 to his own shelter, and set before them the feast in abundance. 90  
 They put their hands to the good things that lay ready before them.  
 But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking,  
 the aged man began to weave his counsel before them  
 first, Nestor, whose advice had shown best before this.

He in kind intention toward all stood forth and addressed them: 95

67. ditch . . . ramparts: The Greeks Zeus' promise to Thetis is being fulfilled.  
 are now besieged beside their ships;

82. Arcs: god of war.

'Son of Atreus, most lordly and king of men, Agamemnon, with you I will end, with you I will make my beginning, since you are lord over many people, and Zeus has given into your hand the sceptre and rights of judgment, to be king over the people. It is yours therefore to speak a word, yours also to listen, 100 and grant the right to another also, when his spirit stirs him to speak for our good. All shall be yours when you lead the way. Still I will speak in the way it seems best to my mind, and no one shall have in his mind any thought that is better than this one that I have in my mind either now or long before now 105 ever since that day, illustrious, when you went from the shelter of angered Achilles, taking by force the girl Briseis against the will of the rest of us, since I for my part urged you strongly not to, but you, giving way to your proud heart's anger, dishonoured a great man, one whom the immortals 110 honour, since you have taken his prize and keep it. But let us even now think how we can make this good and persuade him with words of supplication and with the gifts of friendship.'

Then in turn the lord of men Agamemnon spoke to him:

'Aged sir, this was no lie when you spoke of my madness. 115 I was mad, I myself will not deny it. Worth many fighters is that man whom Zeus in his heart loves, as now he has honoured this man and beaten down the Achaian people. But since I was mad, in the persuasion of my heart's evil, I am willing to make all good, and give back gifts in abundance. 120 Before you all I will count off my gifts in their splendour: seven unfired tripods; ten talents' weight of gold; twenty shining cauldrons; and twelve horses, strong, race-competitors who have won prizes in the speed of their feet. That man would not be

poor in possessions, to whom were given all these have won me, 125 nor be unpossessed of dearly honoured gold, were he given all the prizes these single-foot horses have won for me.

I will give him seven women of Lesbos, the work of whose hands is blameless, whom when he himself captured strong-founded Lesbos I chose, and who in their beauty surpassed the races of women. 130 I will give him these, and with them shall go the one I took from him,

the daughter of Briseus. And to all this I will swear a great oath that I never entered into her bed and never lay with her as is natural for human people, between men and women.

All these gifts shall be his at once; but again, if hereafter 135

122. *unfired*: i.e., unused, brand new.  
*tripods*: A tripod was a three-footed  
kettle. *ten talents' weight of gold*: an  
enormous sum. The talent was the

largest measure of weight.

128. *Lesbos*: a large island off the  
coast of what is now Turkey, famous in  
later times as the home of Sappho.

the gods grant that we storm and sack the great city of Priam,  
let him go to his ship and load it deep as he pleases  
with gold and bronze, when we Achaians divide the war spoils,  
and let him choose for himself twenty of the Trojan women  
who are the loveliest of all after Helen of Argos. 140

And if we come back to Achaian Argos, pride of the tilled land,  
he may be my son-in-law; I will honour him with Orestes  
my growing son, who is brought up there in abundant luxury.  
Since, as I have three daughters there in my strong-built castle,  
Chrysothemis and Laodike and Iphianassa, 145  
let him lead away the one of these that he likes, with no bride-price,  
to the house of Pelcus, and with the girl I will grant him as dowry  
many gifts, such as no man ever gave with his daughter.

I will grant to him seven citadels, strongly settled:  
Kardamyle, and Enope, and Hire of the grasses, 150  
Pherai the sacrosanct, and Antheia deep in the meadows,  
with Aipeia the lovely and Pedasos of the vineyards.

All these lie near the sea, at the bottom of sandy Pylos,  
and men live among them rich in cattle and rich in sheepflocks,  
who will honour him as if he were a god with gifts given 155  
and fulfil his prospering decrees underneath his sceptre.

All this I will bring to pass for him, if he changes from his anger.  
Let him give way. For Hades gives not way, and is pitiless,  
and therefore he among all the gods is most hateful to mortals.  
And let him yield place to me, inasmuch as I am the kinglier 160  
and inasmuch as I can call myself born the elder!

Therupon the Gerenian horseman Nestor answered him:  
'Son of Atreus, most lordly and king of men, Agamemnon,  
none could scorn any longer these gifts you offer to Achilleus  
the king. Come, let us choose and send some men, who in all  
speed 165

will go to the shelter of Achilleus, the son of Peleus;  
or come, the men on whom my eye falls, let these take the duty.  
First of all let Phoinix, beloved of Zeus, be their leader,  
and after him take Aias the great, and brilliant Odysseus,  
and of the heralds let Odios and Eurybates go with them. 170  
Bring also water for their hands, and bid them keep words of good  
omen,

so we may pray to Zeus, son of Kronos, if he will have pity.'

So he spoke, and the word he spoke was pleasing to all of them.  
And the heralds brought water at once, and poured it over  
their hands, and the young men filled the mixing-bowl with pure  
wine 175

168. *Phoinix*: He is especially suited for this embassy since he was tutor to the young Achilleus.

and passed it to all, pouring first a libation in goblets.

Then when they had poured out wine, and drunk as much as their hearts wished,

they set out from the shelter of Atreus' son, Agamemnon.

And the Gerenian horseman Nestor gave them much instruction, looking cagerly at each, and most of all at Odysseus, 180  
to try hard, so that they might win over the blameless Peleion.

So these two walked along the strand of the sea deep-thundering with many prayers to the holder and shaker of the earth, that they might readily persuade the great heart of Aiakides.

Now they came beside the shelters and ships of the Myrmidons 185  
and they found Achilles delighting his heart in a lyre, clear-sounding,

splendid and carefully wrought, with a bridge of silver upon it, which he won out of the spoils when he ruined Eëtion's city.

With this he was pleasuring his heart, and singing of men's fame, as Patroklos was sitting over against him, alone, in silence, 190  
watching Aiakides and the time he would leave off singing.

Now these two came forward, as brilliant Odysseus led them, and stood in his presence. Achilles rose to his feet in amazement holding the lyre as it was, leaving the place where he was sitting.

In the same way Patroklos, when he saw the men come, stood up.

And in greeting Achilles the swift of foot spoke to them: 196

'Welcome. You are my friends who have come, and greatly I need you,

who even to this my anger are dearest of all the Achaians.'

So brilliant Achilles spoke, and guided them forward, and caused them to sit down on couches with purple coverlets 200  
and at once called over to Patroklos who was not far from him:

'Son of Menoitios, set up a mixing-bowl that is bigger, and mix us stronger drink, and make ready a cup for each man, since these who have come beneath my roof are the men that I love best.'

So he spoke, and Patroklos obeyed his beloved companion, 205  
and tossed down a great chopping-block into the firelight, and laid upon it the back of a sheep, and one of a fat goat, with the chine of a fatted pig edged thick with lard, and for him Automedon held the meats, and brilliant Achilles carved them, and cut it well into pieces and spitted them, as meanwhile 210  
Menoitios' son, a man like a god, made the fire blaze greatly.

176. *libation*: an offering to the gods —before the wine was drunk, a little was poured out on the ground.

181. *Peleion*: son of Peleus, i.e., Achilles.

183. *holder and shaker*: Poseidon,

who was believed to be responsible for earthquakes.

184. *Aiakides*: descendant of Aiakos (father of Peleus), i.e., Achilles.

209. *Automedon*: the charioteer of Achilles.

But when the fire had burned itself out, and the flames had died down,  
he scattered the embers apart, and extended the spits across them  
lifting them to the andirons, and sprinkled the meats with divine  
salt.

Then when he had roasted all, and spread the food on the platters,  
Patroklos took the bread and set it out on a table 216  
in fair baskets, while Achilles served the meats. Thereafter  
he himself sat over against the godlike Odysseus  
against the further wall, and told his companion, Patroklos,  
to sacrifice to the gods; and he threw the firstlings in the fire. 220  
They put their hands to the good things that lay ready before  
them.

But when they had put aside their desire for eating and drinking,  
Aias nodded to Phoinix, and brilliant Odysseus saw it,  
and filled a cup with wine, and lifted it to Achilles:  
'Your health, Achilles. You have no lack of your equal portion 225  
either within the shelter of Atreus' son, Agamemnon,  
nor here now in your own. We have good things in abundance  
to feast on; here it is not the desirable feast we think of,  
but a trouble all too great, beloved of Zeus, that we look on  
and are afraid. There is doubt if we save our strong-benched ves-  
sels 230

or if they will be destroyed, unless you put on your war strength.  
The Trojans in their pride, with their far-renowned companions,  
have set up an encampment close by the ships and the rampart,  
and lit many fires along their army, and think no longer  
of being held, but rather to drive in upon the black ships. 235  
And Zeus, son of Kronos, lightens upon their right hand, showing  
them

portents of good, while Hektor in the huge pride of his strength  
rages

irresistibly, reliant on Zeus, and gives way to no one  
neither god nor man, but the strong fury has descended upon him.  
He prays now that the divine Dawn will show most quickly, 240  
since he threatens to shear the uttermost horns from the ship-sterns,  
to light the ships themselves with ravening fire, and to cut down  
the Achaians themselves as they stir from the smoke beside them.

All this I fear terribly in my heart, lest immortals  
accomplish all these threats, and lest for us it be destiny 245  
to die here in Troy, far away from horse-pasturing Argos.  
Up, then! if you are minded, late though it be, to rescue  
the afflicted sons of the Achaians from the Trojan onslaught.  
It will be an affliction to you hereafter, there will be no remedy

found to heal the evil thing when it has been done. No, before-  
hand

250

take thought to beat the evil day aside from the Danaans.

Dear friend, surely thus your father Peleus advised you  
that day when he sent you away to Agamemnon from Phthia:

"My child, for the matter of strength, Athene and Hera will give it  
if it be their will, but be it yours to hold fast in your bosom

255

the anger of the proud heart, for consideration is better.

Keep from the bad complication of quarrel, and all the more for this  
the Argives will honour you, both their younger men and their  
elders."

So the old man advised, but you have forgotten. Yet even now  
stop, and give way from the anger that hurts the heart. Agamem-  
non

260

offers you worthy recompense if you change from your anger.

Come then, if you will, listen to me, while I count off for you  
all the gifts in his shelter that Agamemnon has promised:

Seven unfired tripods; ten talents' weight of gold; twenty  
shining cauldrons; and twelve horses, strong, race-competitors

265

who have won prize in the speed of their feet. That man would not  
be

poor in possessions, to whom were given all these have won him,

nor be unpossessed of dearly honoured gold, were he given

all the prizes Agamemnon's horses won in their speed for him.

He will give you seven women of Lesbos, the work of whose hands  
is blameless, whom when you yourself captured strong-founded

Lesbos

271

he chose, and who in their beauty surpassed the races of women.

He will give you these, and with them shall go the one he took from  
you,

the daughter of Briseus. And to all this he will swear a great oath

that he never entered into her bed and never lay with her

275

as is natural for human people, between men and women.

All these gifts shall be yours at once; but again, if hereafter

the gods grant that we storm and sack the great city of Priam,

you may go to your ship and load it deep as you please with

gold and bronze, when we Achaians divide the war spoils,

280

and you may choose for yourself twenty of the Trojan women,

who are the loveliest of all after Helen of Argos.

And if we come back to Achaian Argos, pride of the tilled land,

you could be his son-in-law; he would honour you with Orestes,

his growing son, who is brought up there in abundant luxury.

285

Since, as he has three daughters there in his strong-built castle,

Chrysothemis and Laodike and Iphianassa,

you may lead away the one of these that you like, with no bride-price,



to the house of Peleus; and with the girl he will grant you as dowry many gifts, such as no man ever gave with his daughter. 290

He will grant you seven citadels, strongly settled:

Kardamyle and Enope and Hire of the grasses,  
Phcrai the sacrosanct, and Antheia deep in the meadows,  
with Aipeia the lovely, and Pedasos of the vineyards.

All these lie near the sea, at the bottom of sandy Pylos, 295  
and men live among them rich in cattle and rich in sheepflocks,  
who will honour you as if you were a god with gifts given  
and fulfil your prospering decrees underneath your sceptre.

All this he will bring to pass for you, if you change from your anger.  
But if the son of Atreus is too much hated in your heart, 300  
himself and his gifts, at least take pity on all the other  
Achaïans, who are afflicted along the host, and will honour you  
as a god. You may win very great glory among them.

For now you might kill Hektor, since he would come very close to  
you

with the wicked fury upon him, since he thinks there is not his equal  
among the rest of the Danaans the ships carried hither.' 306

Then in answer to him spoke Achilleus of the swift feet:

'Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus:

without consideration for you I must make my answer,  
the way I think, and the way it will be accomplished, that you may  
not 310

come one after another, and sit by me, and speak softly.

For as I detest the doorways of Death, I detest that man, who  
hides one thing in the depths of his heart, and speaks forth another.  
But I will speak to you the way it seems best to me: neither  
do I think the son of Atreus, Agamemnon, will persuade me, 315  
nor the rest of the Danaans, since there was no gratitude given  
for fighting incessantly forever against your enemies.

Fate is the same for the man who holds back, the same if he fights  
hard.

We are all held in a single honour, the brave with the weaklings.  
A man dies still if he has done nothing, as one who has done much.  
Nothing is won for me, now that my heart has gone through its  
afflictions 321

in forever setting my life on the hazard of battle.

For as to her unwinged young ones the mother bird brings back  
morsels, wherever she can find them, but as for herself it is suffering,  
such as I, as I lay through all the many nights unsleeping, 325  
such as I wore through the bloody days of the fighting,  
striving with warriors for the sake of these men's women.

But I say that I have stormed from my ships twelve cities  
of men, and by land eleven more through the generous Troad.

nor captured again by force, once it has crossed the teeth's barrier.  
 For my mother Thetis the goddess of the silver feet tells me 410  
 I carry two sorts of destiny toward the day of my death. Either,  
 if I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans,  
 my return home is gone, but my glory shall be everlasting;  
 but if I return home to the beloved land of my fathers,  
 the excellence of my glory is gone, but there will be a long life 415  
 left for me, and my end in death will not come to me quickly.  
 And this would be my counsel to others also, to sail back  
 home again, since no longer shall you find any term set  
 on the sheer city of Ilion, since Zeus of the wide brows has strongly  
 held his own hand over it, and its people are made bold. 420

Do you go back therefore to the great men of the Achaians,  
 and take them this message, since such is the privilege of the princes:  
 that they think out in their minds some other scheme that is better,  
 which might rescue their ships, and the people of the Achaians  
 who man the hollow ships, since this plan will not work for them 425  
 which they thought of by reason of my anger. Let Phoinix  
 remain here with us and sleep here, so that tomorrow  
 he may come with us in our ships to the beloved land of our fathers,  
 if he will; but I will never use force to hold him.'

So he spoke, and all of them stayed stricken to silence 430  
 in amazement at his words. He had spoken to them very strongly.  
 But at long last Phoinix the aged horseman spoke out  
 in a stormburst of tears, and fearing for the ships of the Achaians:  
 'If it is going home, glorious Achilles, you ponder  
 in your heart, and are utterly unwilling to drive the obliterating 435  
 fire from the fast ships, since anger has descended on your spirit,  
 how then shall I, dear child, be left in this place behind you  
 all alone? Peleus the aged horseman sent me forth with you  
 on that day when he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon  
 a mere child, who knew nothing yet of the joining of battle 440  
 nor of debate where men are made pre-eminent. Therefore  
 he sent me along with you to teach you of all these matters,  
 to make you a speaker of words and one who accomplished in action.  
 Therefore apart from you, dear child, I would not be willing  
 to be left behind, not were the god in person to promise 445  
 he would scale away my old age and make me a young man blossoming

as I was that time when I first left Hellas, the land of fair women,  
 running from the hatred of Ormenos' son Amyntor,  
 my father; who hated me for the sake of a fair-haired mistress.  
 For he made love to her himself, and dishonoured his own wife, 450  
 my mother; who was forever taking my knees and entreating me

to lie with this mistress instead so that she would hate the old man.  
I was persuaded and did it; and my father when he heard of it  
straightway

called down his curses, and invoked against me the dreaded furies  
that I might never have any son born of my seed to dandle 455  
on my knees; and the divinities, Zeus of the underworld  
and Persephone the honoured goddess, accomplished his curses.  
Then I took it into my mind to cut him down with the sharp bronze,  
but some one of the immortals checked my anger, reminding me  
of rumour among the people and men's maledictions repeated, 460  
that I might not be called a parricide among the Achaians.  
But now no more could the heart in my breast be ruled entirely  
to range still among these halls when my father was angered.  
Rather it was the many kinsmen and cousins about me  
who held me closed in the house, with supplications repeated, 465  
and slaughtered fat sheep in their numbers, and shambling horn-  
curved

cattle, and numerous swine with the fat abundant upon them  
were singed and stretched out across the flame of Hephaistos,  
and much wine was drunk that was stored in the jars of the old man.  
Nine nights they slept nightlong in their places beside me, 470  
and they kept up an interchange of watches, and the fire was never  
put out; one below the gate of the strong-closed courtyard,  
and one in the ante-chamber before the doors of the bedroom.  
But when the tenth night had come to me in its darkness,  
then I broke the close-compacted doors of the chamber 475  
and got away, and overleapt the fence of the courtyard  
lightly, unnoticed by the guarding men and the women servants.  
Then I fled far away through the wide spaces of Hellas  
and came as far as generous Phthia, mother of sheepflocks,  
and to lord Peleus, who accepted me with a good will 480  
and gave me his love, even as a father loves his own son  
who is a single child brought up among many possessions.  
He made me a rich man, and granted me many people,  
and I lived, lord over the Dolopes, in remotest Phthia,  
and, godlike Achilles, I made you all that you are now, 485  
and loved you out of my heart, for you would not go with another  
out to any feast, nor taste any food in your own halls  
until I had set you on my knees, and cut little pieces  
from the meat, and given you all you wished, and held the wine for  
you.

And many times you soaked the shirt that was on my body 490

454. *furies*: avenging spirits, particularly concerned with crimes committed by kinsmen against kinsmen.

456. *Zeus of the underworld*: the god Hades.

457. *Persephone*: wife of Hades.

with wine you would spit up in the troublesomeness of your childhood.

So I have suffered much through you, and have had much trouble, thinking always how the gods would not bring to birth any children of my own; so that it was you, godlike Achilles, I made my own child, so that some day you might keep hard affliction from me. 495

Then, Achilles, beat down your great anger. It is not yours to have a pitiless heart. The very immortals can be moved; their virtue and honour and strength are greater than ours are,

and yet with sacrifices and offerings for endearment, with libations and with savour men turn back even the immortals in supplication, when any man does wrong and transgresses. 501

For there are also the spirits of Prayer, the daughters of great Zeus, and they are lame of their feet, and wrinkled, and cast their eyes sidelong,

who toil on their way left far behind by the spirit of Ruin: but she, Ruin, is strong and sound on her feet, and therefore 505 far outruns all Prayers, and wins into every country to force men astray; and the Prayers follow as healers after her.

If a man venerates these daughters of Zeus as they draw near, such a man they bring great advantage, and hear his entreaty; but if a man shall deny them, and stubbornly with a harsh word 510 refuse, they go to Zeus, son of Kronos, in supplication that Ruin may overtake this man, that he be hurt, and punished.

So, Achilles: grant, you also, that Zeus' daughters be given their honour, which, lordly though they be, curbs the will of others. Since, were he not bringing gifts and naming still more hereafter, 515 Atreus' son; were he to remain still swollen with rancour, even I would not bid you throw your anger aside, nor defend the Argives, though they needed you sorely. But see now, he offers you much straightway, and has promised you more hereafter;

he has sent the best men to you to supplicate you, choosing them 520 out of the Achaian host, those who to yourself are the dearest of all the Argives. Do not you make vain their argument nor their footsteps, though before this one could not blame your anger.

Thus it was in the old days also, the deeds that we hear of 524 from the great men, when the swelling anger descended upon them. The heroes would take gifts; they would listen, and be persuaded. For I remember this action of old, it is not a new thing, and how it went; you are all my friends, I will tell it among you.

The Kouretes and the steadfast Aitolians were fighting

and slaughtering one another about the city of Kalydon, 530  
the Aitolians in lovely Kalydon's defence, the Kouretes  
furious to storm and sack it in war. For Artemis,  
she of the golden chair, had driven this evil upon them,  
angered that Oineus had not given the pride of the orchards  
to her, first fruits; the rest of the gods were given due sacrifice, 535  
but alone to this daughter of great Zeus he had given nothing.  
He had forgotten, or had not thought, in his hard delusion,  
and in wrath at his whole mighty line the Lady of Arrows  
sent upon them the fierce wild boar with the shining teeth, who  
after the way of his kind did much evil to the orchards of Oineus. 540  
For he ripped up whole tall trees from the ground and scattered  
them headlong  
roots and all, even to the very flowers of the orchard.  
The son of Oineus killed this boar, Meleagros, assembling  
together many hunting men out of numerous cities  
with their hounds; since the boar might not have been killed by a  
few men, 545  
so huge was he, and had put many men on the sad fire for burning.  
But the goddess again made a great stir of anger and crying  
battle, over the head of the boar and the bristling boar's hide,  
between Kouretes and the high-hearted Aitolians. So long  
as Meleagros lover of battle stayed in the fighting, 550  
it went the worse for the Kouretes, and they could not even  
hold their ground outside the wall, though they were so many.  
But when the anger came upon Meleagros, such anger  
as wells in the hearts of others also, though their minds are careful,  
he, in the wrath of his heart against his own mother, Althaia, 555  
lay apart with his wedded bride, Kleopatra the lovely,  
daughter of sweet-stepping Marpessa, child of Euenos,  
and Idas, who was the strongest of all men upon earth  
in his time; for he even took up the bow to face the King's onset,  
Phoibos Apollo, for the sake of the sweet-stepping maiden; 560  
a girl her father and honoured mother had named in their palace  
Alkyone, sea-bird, as a by-name, since for her sake  
her mother with the sorrow-laden cry of a sea-bird  
wept because far-reaching Phoibos Apollo had taken her;  
with this Kleopatra he lay mulling his heart-sore anger, 565  
raging by reason of his mother's curses, which she called down

534. *Oineus*: king of Kalydon.

557. *Marpessa*: The story to which Homer alludes runs as follows: Idas, the famous archer, carried off and married Marpessa, daughter of Euenos. Apollo also had been her suitor, and he overtook Idas and carried off Marpessa. Idas defied Apollo to combat, but Zeus decided that the choice was up to

Marpessa, who preferred Idas. They gave their daughter Kleopatra the nickname Alkyone (compare "halcyon"), the name of a sea-bird that is supposed to mourn for its mate, to commemorate the time when Marpessa, carried off by Apollo, mourned for Idas.

564. *her*: Marpessa.

from the gods upon him, in deep grief for the death of her brother,  
 and many times beating with her hands on the earth abundant  
 she called on Hades and on honoured Persephone, lying  
 at length along the ground, and the tears were wet on her bosom, 570  
 to give death to her son; and Erinys, the mist-walking,  
 she of the heart without pity, heard her out of the dark places.  
 Presently there was thunder about the gates, and the sound rose  
 of towers under assault, and the Aitolian elders  
 supplicated him, sending their noblest priests of the immortals, 575  
 to come forth and defend them; they offered him a great gift:  
 wherever might lie the richest ground in lovely Kalydon,  
 there they told him to choose out a piece of land, an entirely  
 good one, of fifty acres, the half of it to be vineyard  
 and the half of it unworked ploughland of the plain to be fur-  
 rowed. 580

And the aged horseman Oineus again and again entreated him,  
 and took his place at the threshold of the high-vaulted chamber  
 and shook against the bolted doors, pleading with his own son.  
 And again and again his honoured mother and his sisters  
 entreated him, but he only refused the more; then his own friends 586  
 who were the most honoured and dearest of all entreated him;  
 but even so they could not persuade the heart within him  
 until, as the chamber was under close assault, the Kouretes  
 were mounting along the towers and set fire to the great city.  
 And then at last his wife, the fair-girdled bride, supplicated 590  
 Melcagros, in tears, and rehearsed in their numbers before him  
 all the sorrows that come to men when their city is taken:  
 they kill the men, and the fire leaves the city in ashes,  
 and strangers lead the children away and the deep-girdled women.  
 And the heart, as he listened to all this evil, was stirred within  
 him 595

and he rose, and went, and closed his body in shining armour.  
 So he gave way in his own heart, and drove back the day of evil  
 from the Aitolians; yet these no longer would make good  
 their many and gracious gifts; yet he drove back the evil from them.

Listen, then; do not have such a thought in your mind; let not 600  
 the spirit within you turn you that way, dear friend. It would be  
 worse

to defend the ships after they are burning. No, with gifts promised  
 go forth. The Achaians will honour you as they would an immortal.  
 But if without gifts you go into the fighting where men perish,  
 your honour will no longer be as great, though you drive back the  
 battle.' 605

567. *her brother*: In the course of the battles Meleagros had killed one of his mother's brothers.

571. *Erinys*: the personified spirit of vengeance, a Fury (compare "furies," Book IX, l. 454).

Then in answer to him spoke Achilleus of the swift feet:  
 'Phoinix my father, aged, illustrious, such honour is a thing  
 I need not. I think I am honoured already in Zeus' ordinance  
 which will hold me here beside my curved ships as long as life's wind  
 stays in my breast, as long as my knees have their spring beneath  
 me. 610

And put away in your thoughts this other thing I tell you.  
 Stop confusing my heart with lamentation and sorrow  
 for the favour of great Atreides. It does not become you  
 to love this man, for fear you turn hateful to me, who love you.  
 It should be your pride with me to hurt whoever shall hurt me. 615  
 Be king equally with me; take half of my honour.  
 These men will carry back the message; you stay here and sleep here  
 in a soft bed, and we shall decide tomorrow, as dawn shows,  
 whether to go back home again or else to remain here.'

He spoke, and, saying nothing, nodded with his brows to Patroklos 620

to make up a neat bed for Phoinix, so the others might presently  
 think of going home from his shelter. The son of Telamon,  
 Aias the godlike, saw it, and now spoke his word among them:  
 'Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus:  
 let us go. I think that nothing will be accomplished 625  
 by argument on this errand; it is best to go back quickly  
 and tell this story, though it is not good, to the Danaans  
 who sit there waiting for us to come back, seeing that Achilleus  
 has made savage the proud-hearted spirit within his body.  
 He is hard, and does not remember that friends' affection 630  
 wherein we honoured him by the ships, far beyond all others.  
 Pitiless. And yet a man takes from his brother's slayer  
 the blood price, or the price for a child who was killed, and the guilty  
 one, when he has largely repaid, stays still in the country,  
 and the injured man's heart is curbed, and his pride, and his an-  
 ger 635

when he has taken the price; but the gods put in your breast a  
 spirit

not to be placated, bad, for the sake of one single  
 girl. Yet now we offer you seven, surpassingly lovely,  
 and much beside these. Now make gracious the spirit within you.  
 Respect your own house; see, we are under the same roof with  
 you, 640

from the multitude of the Danaans, we who desire beyond all  
 others to have your honour and love, out of all the Achaians.'

Then in answer to him spoke Achilleus of the swift feet:  
 'Son of Telamon, seed of Zeus, Aias, lord of the people:  
 all that you have said seems spoken after my own mind. 645

Yet still the heart in me swells up in anger, when I remember  
 the disgrace that he wrought upon me before the Argives,  
 the son of Atreus, as if I were some dishonoured vagabond.  
 Do you then go back to him, and take him this message:  
 that I shall not think again of the bloody fighting 650  
 until such time as the son of wise Priam, Hektor the brilliant,  
 comes all the way to the ships of the Myrmidons, and their shelters,  
 slaughtering the Argives, and shall darken with fire our vessels.  
 But around my own shelter, I think, and beside my black ship  
 Hektor will be held, though he be very hungry for battle.' 655

He spoke, and they taking each a two-handled cup poured out  
 a libation, then went back to their ships, and Odysseus led them.  
 Now Patroklos gave the maids and his followers orders  
 to make up without delay a neat bed for Phoinix.  
 And these obeyed him and made up the bed as he had commanded,  
 laying fleeces on it, and a blanket, and a sheet of fine linen. 661  
 There the old man lay down and waited for the divine Dawn.  
 But Achilles slept in the inward corner of the strong-built shelter,  
 and a woman lay beside him, one he had taken from Lesbos,  
 Phorbas' daughter, Diomedes of the fair colouring. 665  
 In the other corner Patroklos went to bed; with him also  
 was a girl, Iphis the fair-girdled, whom brilliant Achilles  
 gave him, when he took sheer Skyros, Enyeus' citadel.

Now when these had come back to the shelters of Agamemnon,  
 the sons of the Achaians greeted them with their gold cups 670  
 uplifted, one after another, standing, and asked them questions.  
 And the first to question them was the lord of men, Agamemnon:  
 'Tell me, honoured Odysseus, great glory of the Achaians:  
 is he willing to fight the ravaging fire away from our vessels,  
 or did he refuse, and does the anger still hold his proud heart?' 675

Then long-suffering great Odysseus spoke to him in answer:  
 'Son of Atreus, most lordly, king of men, Agamemnon.  
 That man will not quench his anger, but still more than ever  
 is filled with rage. He refuses you and refuses your presents.  
 He tells you yourself to take counsel among the Argives 680  
 how to save your ships, and the people of the Achaians.  
 And he himself has threatened that tomorrow as dawn shows  
 he will drag down his strong-benched, oarswept ships to the  
 water.

He said it would be his counsel to others also, to sail back  
 home again, since no longer will you find any term set 685  
 on the sheer city of Ilion, since Zeus of the wide brows has strongly  
 held his own hand over it, and its people are made bold.  
 So he spoke. There are these to attest it who went there with me  
 also, Aias, and the two heralds, both men of good counsel.



But aged Phoinix stayed there for the night, as Achilles urged him,

690

so he might go home in the ships to the beloved land of his fathers if Phoinix will; but he will never use force to persuade him.'

So he spoke, and all of them stayed stricken to silence in amazement at his words. He had spoken to them very strongly. For a long time the sons of the Achaians said nothing, in sorrow, but at long last Diomedes of the great war cry spoke to them:

695

'Son of Atreus, most lordly and king of men, Agamemnon, I wish you had not supplicated the blameless son of Peleus with innumerable gifts offered. He is a proud man without this, and now you have driven him far deeper into his pride. Rather we shall pay him no more attention, whether he comes in with us or stays away. He will fight again, whenever the time comes that the heart in his body urges him to, and the god drives him. Come then, do as I say, and let us all be won over.

700

Go to sleep, now that the inward heart is made happy with food and drink, for these are the strength and courage within us.

705

But when the lovely dawn shows forth with rose fingers, Atreides, rapidly form before our ships both people and horses stirring them on, and yourself be ready to fight in the foremost.'

So he spoke, and all the kings gave him their approval, acclaiming the word of Diomedes, breaker of horses.

710

Then they poured a libation, and each man went to his shelter, where they went to their beds and took the blessing of slumber.

[After Achilles' refusal, the situation of the Greeks worsened rapidly. Agamemnon, Diomedes, and Odysseus were all wounded. The Trojans breached the stockade and fought beside the ships. Patroklos tried to bring Achilles to the aid of the Greeks, but the most he could obtain was permission for himself to fight, clad in Achilles' armor, at the head of the Myrmidons. He turned the tide of battle and drove the Trojans back to their walls, only to fall himself through the direct intervention of Apollo. Hektor stripped Achilles' armor from the body. A fierce fight for the body itself ended in partial success for the Greeks; they took Patroklos' body but had to retreat to their camp, with the Trojans at their heels.]

### Book XVIII

So these fought on in the likeness of blazing fire. Meanwhile, Antilochos came, a swift-footed messenger, to Achilles, and found him sitting in front of the steep-horned ships, thinking over in his heart of things which had now been accomplished.

2. *Antilochos*: a son of Nestor.

Disturbed, Achilles spoke to the spirit in his own great heart: 5  
 'Ah me, how is it that once again the flowing-haired Achaians  
 are driven out of the plain on their ships in fear and confusion?  
 May the gods not accomplish vile sorrows upon the heart in me  
 in the way my mother once made it clear to me, when she told me  
 how while I yet lived the bravest of all the Myrmidons 10  
 must leave the light of the sun beneath the hands of the Trojans.  
 Surely, then, the strong son of Menoitios has perished.

Unhappy! and yet I told him, once he had beaten the fierce fire  
 off, to come back to the ships, not fight in strength against Hektor.'

Now as he was pondering this in his heart and his spirit, 15  
 meanwhile the son of stately Nestor was drawing near him  
 and wept warm tears, and gave Achilles his sorrowful message:  
 'Ah me, son of valiant Peleus; you must hear from me  
 the ghastly message of a thing I wish never had happened.  
 Patroklos has fallen, and now they are fighting over his body 20  
 which is naked. Hektor of the shining helm has taken his armour.'

He spoke, and the black cloud of sorrow closed on Achilles.  
 In both hands he caught up the grimy dust, and poured it  
 over his head and face, and fouled his handsome countenance,  
 and the black ashes were scattered over his immortal tunic. 25  
 And he himself, mightily in his might, in the dust lay  
 at length, and took and tore at his hair with his hands, and defiled it.  
 And the handmaidens Achilles and Patroklos had taken  
 captive, stricken at heart cried out aloud, and came running  
 out of doors about valiant Achilles, and all of them 30  
 beat their breasts with their hands, and the limbs went slack in each  
 of them.

On the other side Antilochos mourned with him, letting the tears  
 fall,

and held the hands of Achilles as he grieved in his proud heart,  
 fearing Achilles might cut his throat with the iron. He cried out  
 terribly, aloud, and the lady his mother heard him 35  
 as she sat in the depths of the sea at the side of her aged father,  
 and she cried shrill in turn, and the goddesses gathered about her,  
 all who along the depth of the sea were daughters of Nereus.

For Glauke was there, Kymodoke and Thaleia,  
 Nesaie and Speio and Thoë, and ox-eyed Halia; 40  
 Kymothoë was there, Aktaia and Limnoreia,  
 Melite and Iaira, Amphithoë and Agauë,  
 Doto and Proto, Dynamene and Phcrousa,  
 Dexamene and Amphinome and Kallianeira;  
 Doris and Panope and glorious Galateia, 45  
 Nemertes and Apseudes and Kallianassa;

Klymene was there, Ianeira and Ianassa,  
Maira and Oreithyia and lovely-haired Amatheia,  
and the rest who along the depth of the sea were daughters of  
Nereus.

The silvery cave was filled with these, and together all of them 50  
beat their breasts, and among them Thetis led out the threnody:  
'Hear me, Nereids, my sisters; so you may all know  
well all the sorrows that are in my heart, when you hear of them  
from me.

Ah me, my sorrow, the bitterness in this best of child-bearing,  
since I gave birth to a son who was without fault and powerful, 55  
conspicuous among heroes; and he shot up like a young tree,  
and I nurtured him, like a tree grown in the pride of the orchard.  
I sent him away with the curved ships into the land of Ilion  
to fight with the Trojans; but I shall never again receive him  
won home again to his country and into the house of Pelcus. 60  
Yet while I see him live and he looks on the sunlight, he has  
sorrows, and though I go to him I can do nothing to help him.  
Yet I shall go, to look on my dear son, and to listen  
to the sorrow that has come to him as he stays back from the  
fighting.'

So she spoke, and left the cave, and the others together 65  
went with her in tears, and about them the wave of the water  
was broken. Now these, when they came to the generous Troad,  
followed each other out on the sea-shore, where close together  
the ships of the Myrmidons were hauled up about swift Achilles.  
There as he sighed heavily the lady his mother stood by him 70  
and cried out shrill and aloud, and took her son's head in her arms,  
then

sorrowing for him she spoke to him in winged words: 'Why then,  
child, do you lament? What sorrow has come to your heart now?  
Speak out, do not hide it. These things are brought to accomplish-  
ment

through Zeus: in the way that you lifted your hands and prayed 75  
for,  
that all the sons of the Achaians be pinned on their grounded vessels  
by reason of your loss, and suffer things that are shameful.'

Then sighing heavily Achilles of the swift feet answered her:  
'My mother, all these things the Olympian brought to accomplish-  
ment.

But what pleasure is this to me, since my dear companion has per- 80  
ished,

Patroklos, whom I loved beyond all other companions,  
as well as my own life. I have lost him, and Hektor, who killed him,

has stripped away that gigantic armour, a wonder to look on  
 and splendid, which the gods gave Peleus, a glorious present,  
 on that day they drove you to the marriage bed of a mortal. 85  
 I wish you had gone on living then with the other goddesses  
 of the sea, and that Peleus had married some mortal woman.  
 As it is, there must be on your heart a numberless sorrow  
 for your son's death, since you can never again receive him  
 won home again to his country; since the spirit within does not  
 drive me 90

to go on living and be among men, except on condition  
 that Hektor first be beaten down under my spear, lose his life  
 and pay the price for stripping Patroklos, the son of Menoitios.'

Then in turn Thetis spoke to him, letting the tears fall:  
 'Then I must lose you soon, my child, by what you are saying, 95  
 since it is decreed your death must come soon after Hektor's.'

Then deeply disturbed Achilleus of the swift feet answered her:  
 'I must die soon, then; since I was not to stand by my companion  
 when he was killed. And now, far away from the land of his fathers,  
 he has perished, and lacked my fighting strength to defend him. 100  
 Now, since I am not going back to the beloved land of my fathers,  
 since I was no light of safety to Patroklos, nor to my other  
 companions, who in their numbers went down before glorious Hek-  
 tor,

but sit here beside my ships, a useless weight on the good land,  
 I, who am such as no other of the bronze-armoured Achaians 105  
 in battle, though there are others also better in council—  
 why, I wish that strife would vanish away from among gods and  
 mortals,  
 and gall, which makes a man grow angry for all his great mind,  
 that gall of anger that swarms like smoke inside of a man's heart  
 and becomes a thing sweeter to him by far than the dripping of  
 honey. 110

So it was here that the lord of men Agamemnon angered me.  
 Still, we will let all this be a thing of the past, and for all our  
 sorrow beat down by force the anger deeply within us.  
 Now I shall go, to overtake that killer of a dear life,  
 Hektor; then I will accept my own death, at whatever 115  
 time Zeus wishes to bring it about, and the other immortals.  
 For not even the strength of Herakles fled away from destruction,  
 although he was dearest of all to lord Zeus, son of Kronos,  
 but his fate beat him under, and the wearisome anger of Hera.  
 So I likewise, if such is the fate which has been wrought for me, 120  
 shall lie still, when I am dead. Now I must win excellent glory,

117. *Herakles*: son of Zeus; pursued finally died in agony from the effects of a poisoned garment.  
 by the jealousy of Hera, he was forced to undertake twelve great labors and

and drive some one of the women of Troy, or some deep-girdled Dardanian woman, lifting up to her soft cheeks both hands to wipe away the close bursts of tears in her lamentation, and learn that I stayed too long out of the fighting. Do not hold me back from the fight, though you love me. You will not persuade me.' 125

In turn the goddess Thetis of the silver feet answered him: 'Yes, it is true, my child, this is no cowardly action, to beat aside sudden death from your afflicted companions. Yet, see now, your splendid armour, glaring and brazen, is held among the Trojans, and Hektor of the shining helmet wears it on his own shoulders, and glories in it. Yet I think he will not glory for long, since his death stands very close to him. Therefore do not yet go into the grind of the war god, not before with your own eyes you see me come back to you. For I am coming to you at dawn and as the sun rises bringing splendid armour to you from the lord Hephaistos.' 130 135

So she spoke, and turned, and went away from her son, and turning now to her sisters of the sea she spoke to them: 'Do you now go back into the wide fold of the water to visit the ancient of the sea and the house of our father, and tell him everything. I am going to tall Olympus and to Hephaistos, the glorious smith, if he might be willing to give me for my son renowned and radiant armour.' 140

She spoke, and they plunged back beneath the wave of the water, while she the goddess Thetis of the silver feet went onward to Olympus, to bring back to her son the glorious armour. 146

So her feet carried her to Olympus; meanwhile the Achaians with inhuman clamour before the attack of manslaughtering Hektor fled until they were making for their own ships and the Hellespont; nor could the strong-graved Achaians have dragged the body of Patroklos, henchman of Achilleus, from under the missiles, for once again the men and the horses came over upon him, and Hektor, Priam's son, who fought like a flame in his fury. Three times from behind glorious Hektor caught him by the feet, trying to drag him, and called aloud on the Trojans. Three times the two Aiantes with their battle-fury upon them beat him from the corpse, but he, steady in the confidence of his great strength, 151 155

kept making, now a rush into the crowd, or again at another time stood fast, with his great cry, but gave not a bit of ground backward. 160

And as herdsmen who dwell in the fields are not able to frighten a tawny lion in his great hunger away from a carcass,

so the two Aiantes, marshals of men, were not able  
 to scare Hektor, Priam's son, away from the body.  
 And now he would have dragged it away and won glory forever 165  
 had not swift wind-footed Iris come running from Olympos  
 with a message for Peleus' son to arm. She came secretly  
 from Zeus and the other gods, since it was Hera who sent her.  
 She came and stood close to him and addressed him in winged  
 words:

'Rise up, son of Peleus, most terrifying of all men. 170  
 Defend Patroklos, for whose sake the terrible fighting  
 stands now in front of the ships. They are destroying each other;  
 the Achaians fight in defence over the fallen body  
 while the others, the Trojans, are rushing to drag the corpse off  
 to windy Ilion, and beyond all glorious Hektor 175  
 rages to haul it away, since the anger within him is urgent  
 to cut the head from the soft neck and set it on sharp stakes.  
 Up, then, lie here no longer; let shame come into your heart, lest  
 Patroklos become sport for the dogs of Troy to worry,  
 your shame, if the body goes from here with defilement upon it.' 180

Then in turn Achilles of the swift feet answered her:

'Divine Iris, what god sent you to me with a message?'

Then in turn swift wind-footed Iris spoke to him:

'Hera sent me, the honoured wife of Zeus; but the son of  
 Kronos, who sits on high, does not know this, nor any other 185  
 immortal, of all those who dwell by the snows of Olympos.'

Then in answer to her spoke Achilles of the swift feet:

'How shall I go into the fighting? They have my armour.  
 And my beloved mother told me I must not be armoured,  
 not before with my own eyes I see her come back to me. 190  
 She promised she would bring magnificent arms from Hephaistos.  
 Nor do I know of another whose glorious armour I could wear  
 unless it were the great shield of Telamonian Aias.  
 But he himself wears it, I think, and goes in the foremost  
 of the spear-fight over the body of fallen Patroklos.' 195

Then in turn swift wind-footed Iris spoke to him:

'Yes, we also know well how they hold your glorious armour.  
 But go to the ditch, and show yourself as you are to the Trojans,  
 if perhaps the Trojans might be frightened, and give way  
 from their attack, and the fighting sons of the Achaians get wind 200  
 again after hard work. There is little breathing space in the fighting.'

So speaking Iris of the swift feet went away from him;  
 but Achilles, the beloved of Zeus, rose up, and Athene  
 swept about his powerful shoulders the fluttering aegis;

166. *Iris*: messenger of the gods, particularly of Hera.

193. *Telamonian*: The more famous of the two heroes called Aias (Ajax) was the son of Telamon.

and she, the divine among goddesses, about his head circled  
a golden cloud, and kindled from it a flame far-shining. 205

As when a flare goes up into the high air from a city  
from an island far away, with enemies fighting about it  
who all day long are in the hateful division of Ares  
fighting from their own city, but as the sun goes down signal 210  
fires blaze out one after another, so that the glare goes  
pulsing high for men of the neighbouring islands to see it,  
in case they might come over in ships to beat off the enemy;  
so from the head of Achilles the blaze shot into the bright air.  
He went from the wall and stood by the ditch, nor mixed with the  
other 215

Achaïans, since he followed the close command of his mother.  
There he stood, and shouted, and from her place Pallas Athene  
gave cry, and drove an endless terror upon the Trojans.

As loud as comes the voice that is screamed out by a trumpet  
by murderous attackers who beleaguer a city, 220  
so then high and clear went up the voice of Aiakides.

But the Trojans, when they heard the brazen voice of Aiakides,  
the heart was shaken in all, and the very floating-maned horses  
turned their chariots about, since their hearts saw the coming afflic-  
tions.

The charioteers were dumbfounded as they saw the unwearied dan-  
gerous 225

fire that played above the head of great-hearted Peleion  
blazing, and kindled by the goddess grey-eyed Athene.

Three times across the ditch brilliant Achilles gave his great cry,  
and three times the Trojans and their renowned companions were  
routed.

There at that time twelve of the best men among them perished 230  
upon their own chariots and spears. Meanwhile the Achaïans  
gladly pulled Patroklos out from under the missiles  
and set him upon a litter, and his own companions about him  
stood mourning, and along with them swift-footed Achilles  
went, letting fall warm tears as he saw his steadfast companion 235  
lying there on a carried litter and torn with the sharp bronze,  
the man he had sent off before with horses and chariot  
into the fighting; who never again came home to be welcomed.

Now the lady Hera of the ox eyes drove the unwilling  
weariless sun god to sink in the depth of the Ocean, 240  
and the sun went down, and the brilliant Achaïans gave over  
their strong fighting, and the doubtful collision of battle.

The Trojans on the other side moved from the strong encounter

209. Ares: the god of war.

221. Aiakides: Achilles, grandson  
of Aiakos.

in their turn, and unyoked their running horses from under the  
 chariots,  
 and gathered into assembly before taking thought for their supper.  
 They stood on their feet in assembly, nor did any man have the pa-  
 tience

246

to sit down, but the terror was on them all, seeing that Achilles  
 had appeared, after he had stayed so long from the difficult fighting.  
 First to speak among them was the careful Poulydamas,  
 Panthöös' son, who alone of them looked before and behind him. 250  
 He was companion to Hektor, and born on the same night with him,  
 but he was better in words, the other with the spear far better.  
 He in kind intention toward all stood forth and addressed them:

'Now take careful thought, dear friends; for I myself urge you  
 to go back into the city and not wait for the divine dawn 255  
 in the plain beside the ships. We are too far from the wall now.

While this man was still angry with great Agamemnon,  
 for all that time the Achaians were easier men to fight with.  
 For I also used then to be one who was glad to sleep out  
 near their ships, and I hoped to capture the oarswept vessels. 260  
 But now I terribly dread the swift-footed son of Peleus.

So violent is the valour in him, he will not be willing  
 to stay here in the plain, where now Achaians and Trojans  
 from either side sunder between them the wrath of the war god.  
 With him, the fight will be for the sake of our city and women. 265

Let us go into the town; believe me; thus it will happen.  
 For this present, immortal night has stopped the swift-footed  
 son of Peleus, but if he catches us still in this place  
 tomorrow, and drives upon us in arms, a man will be well  
 aware of him, be glad to get back into sacred Ilion, 270

the man who escapes; there will be many Trojans the vultures  
 and dogs will feed on. But let such a word be out of my hearing!  
 If all of us will do as I say, though it hurts us to do it,  
 this night we will hold our strength in the market place, and the  
 great walls

and the gateways, and the long, smooth-planed, close-joined gate  
 timbers

275

that close to fit them shall defend our city. Then, early  
 in the morning, under dawn, we shall arm ourselves in our war gear  
 and take stations along the walls. The worse for him, if he endeav-  
 ours

to come away from the ships and fight us here for our city.  
 Back he must go to his ships again, when he wears out the strong  
 necks

280

250. *before and behind him*: He was a prophet; he knew the past and foresaw the future.



of his horses, driving them at a gallop everywhere by the city.  
His valour will not give him leave to burst in upon us  
nor sack our town. Sooner the circling dogs will feed on him.'

Then looking darkly at him Hektor of the shining helm spoke:  
'Poulydamas, these things that you argue please me no longer 285  
when you tell us to go back again and be cooped in our city.  
Have you not all had your glut of being fenced in our outworks?  
There was a time when mortal men would speak of the city  
of Priam as a place with much gold and much bronze. But now  
the lovely treasures that lay away in our houses have vanished, 290  
and many possessions have been sold and gone into Phrygia  
and into Maonia the lovely, when great Zeus was angry.  
But now, when the son of devious-devising Kronos has given  
me the winning of glory by the ships, to pin the Achaians  
on the sea, why, fool, no longer show these thoughts to our people.  
Not one of the Trojans will obey you. I shall not allow it. 296  
Come, then, do as I say and let us all be persuaded.  
Now, take your supper by positions along the encampment,  
and do not forget your watch, and let every man be wakeful.  
And if any Trojan is strongly concerned about his possessions, 300  
let him gather them and give them to the people, to use them in  
common.

It is better for one of us to enjoy them than for the Achaians.  
In the morning, under dawn, we shall arm ourselves in our war gear  
and waken the bitter god of war by the hollow vessels.  
If it is true that brilliant Achilleus is risen beside their 305  
ships, then the worse for him if he tries it, since I for my part  
will not run from him out of the sorrowful battle, but rather  
stand fast, to see if he wins the great glory, or if I can win it.  
The war god is impartial. Before now he has killed the killer.'

So spoke Hektor, and the Trojans thundered to hear him; 310  
fools, since Pallas Athene had taken away the wits from them.  
They gave their applause to Hektor in his counsel of evil,  
but none to Poulydamas, who had spoken good sense before them.  
They took their supper along the encampment. Meanwhile the  
Achaians

mourned all night in lamentation over Patroklos. 315  
Peleus' son led the thronging chant of their lamentation,  
and laid his manslaughtering hands over the chest of his dear friend  
with outbursts of incessant grief. As some great bearded lion  
when some man, a deer hunter, has stolen his cubs away from him  
out of the close wood; the lion comes back too late, and is an-  
guished, 320

and turns into many valleys quartering after the man's trail  
on the chance of finding him, and taken with bitter anger;

so he, groaning heavily, spoke out to the Myrmidons:  
 'Ah me. It was an empty word I cast forth on that day  
 when in his halls I tried to comfort the hero Menoitios. 325  
 I told him I would bring back his son in glory to Opous  
 with Ilion sacked, and bringing his share of war spoils allotted.  
 But Zeus does not bring to accomplishment all thoughts in men's  
 minds.

Thus it is destiny for us both to stain the same soil  
 here in Troy; since I shall never come home, and my father, 330  
 Peleus the aged rider, will not welcome me in his great house,  
 nor Thetis my mother, but in this place the earth will receive me.  
 But seeing that it is I, Patroklos, who follow you underground,  
 I will not bury you till I bring to this place the armour  
 and the head of Hektor, since he was your great-hearted murderer.  
 Before your burning pyre I shall behead twelve glorious 336  
 children of the Trojans, for my anger over your slaying.  
 Until then, you shall lie where you are in front of my curved ships  
 and beside you women of Troy and deep-girdled Dardanian women  
 shall sorrow for you night and day and shed tears for you, those  
 whom 340

you and I worked hard to capture by force and the long spear  
 in days when we were storming the rich cities of mortals.'

So speaking brilliant Achilles gave orders to his companions  
 to set a great cauldron across the fire, so that with all speed  
 they could wash away the clotted blood from Patroklos. 345  
 They set up over the blaze of the fire a bath-water cauldron  
 and poured water into it and put logs underneath and kindled them.  
 The fire worked on the swell of the cauldron, and the water heated.  
 But when the water had come to a boil in the shining bronze, then  
 they washed the body and anointed it softly with olive oil 350  
 and stopped the gashes in his body with stored-up unguents  
 and laid him on a bed, and shrouded him in a thin sheet  
 from head to foot, and covered that over with a white mantle.

Then all night long, gathered about Achilles of the swift feet,  
 the Myrmidons mourned for Patroklos and lamented over him. 355  
 But Zeus spoke to Hera, who was his wife and his sister:  
 'So you have acted, then, lady Hera of the ox eyes.

You have roused up Achilles of the swift feet. It must be then  
 that the flowing-haired Achaians are born of your own generation.'

Then the goddess the ox-eyed lady Hera answered him: 360  
 'Majesty, son of Kronos, what sort of thing have you spoken?  
 Even one who is mortal will try to accomplish his purpose  
 for another, though he be a man and knows not such wisdom as  
 we do.

As for me then, who claim I am highest of all the goddesses,

both ways, since I am eldest born and am called your consort, 365  
yours, and you in turn are lord over all the immortals,  
how could I not weave sorrows for the men of Troy, when I hate  
them?’

Now as these two were saying things like this to each other,  
Thetis of the silver feet came to the house of Hephaistos,  
imperishable, starry, and shining among the immortals, 370  
built in bronze for himself by the god of the dragging footsteps.  
She found him sweating as he turned here and there to his bellows  
busily, since he was working on twenty tripods  
which were to stand against the wall of his strong-founded dwelling.  
And he had set golden wheels underneath the base of each one 375  
so that of their own motion they could wheel into the immortal  
gathering, and return to his house: a wonder to look at.  
These were so far finished, but the elaborate ear handles  
were not yet on. He was forging these, and beating the chains out.  
As he was at work on this in his craftsmanship and his cunning 380  
meanwhile the goddess Thetis the silver-footed drew near him.  
Charis of the shining veil saw her as she came forward,  
she, the lovely goddess the renowned strong-armed one had married.  
She came, and caught her hand and called her by name and spoke  
to her:

‘Why is it, Thetis of the light robes, you have come to our house  
now? 385  
We honour you and love you; but you have not come much before  
this.

But come in with me, so I may put entertainment before you.’

She spoke, and, shining among divinities, led the way forward  
and made Thetis sit down in a chair that was wrought elaborately  
and splendid with silver nails, and under it was a footstool. 390  
She called to Hephaistos the renowned smith and spoke a word to  
him:

‘Hephaistos, come this way; here is Thetis, who has need of you.’

Hearing her the renowned smith of the strong arms answered her:  
‘Then there is a goddess we honour and respect in our house.  
She saved me when I suffered much at the time of my great fall 395  
through the will of my own brazen-faced mother, who wanted  
to hide me, for being lame. Then my soul would have taken much  
suffering

had not Eurynome and Thetis caught me and held me,  
Eurynome, daughter of Ocean, whose stream bends back in a circle.

371. *dragging footsteps*: Hephaistos was lame.

382. *Charis*: Her name means “grace,” “beauty.”

399. *in a circle*: since the river Ocean was supposed to surround the earth.

With them I worked nine years as a smith, and wrought many intricate things; pins that bend back, curved clasps, cups, necklaces, working there in the hollow of the cave, and the stream of Ocean around us went on forever with its foam and its murmur. No other among the gods or among mortal men knew about us except Eurynome and Thetis. They knew, since they saved me. Now she has come into our house; so I must by all means do everything to give recompense to lovely-haired Thetis for my life. Therefore set out before her fair entertainment while I am putting away my bellows and all my instruments.'

He spoke, and took the huge blower off from the block of the anvil limping; and yet his shrunken legs moved lightly beneath him. He set the bellows away from the fire, and gathered and put away all the tools with which he worked in a silver strongbox. Then with a sponge he wiped clean his forehead, and both hands, and his massive neck and hairy chest, and put on a tunic, and took up a heavy stick in his hand, and went to the doorway limping. And in support of their master moved his attendants. These are golden, and in appearance like living young women. There is intelligence in their hearts, and there is speech in them and strength, and from the immortal gods they have learned how to do things.

These stirred nimbly in support of their master, and moving near to where Thetis sat in her shining chair, Hephaistos caught her by the hand and called her by name and spoke a word to her:

'Why is it, Thetis of the light robes, you have come to our house now?

We honour you and love you; but you have not come much before this.

Speak forth what is in your mind. My heart is urgent to do it if I can, and if it is a thing that can be accomplished.'

Then in turn Thetis answered him, letting the tears fall: 'Hephaistos, is there among all the goddesses on Olympus one who in her heart has endured so many grim sorrows as the griefs Zeus, son of Kronos, has given me beyond others? Of all the other sisters of the sea he gave me to a mortal, to Peleus, Aiakos' son, and I had to endure mortal marriage though much against my will. And now he, broken by mournful old age, lies away in his halls. Yet I have other troubles. For since he has given me a son to bear and to raise up conspicuous among heroes, and he shot up like a young tree, I nurtured him, like a tree grown in the pride of the orchard. I sent him away in the curved ships to the land of Ilion

to fight with the Trojans; but I shall never again receive him  
won home again to his country and into the house of Peleus. 440  
Yet while I see him live and he looks on the sunlight, he has  
sorrows, and though I go to him I can do nothing to help him.  
And the girl the sons of the Achaians chose out for his honour  
powerful Agamemnon took her away again out of his hands. 445  
For her his heart has been wasting in sorrow; but meanwhile the  
Trojans

pinned the Achaians against their grounded ships, and would not  
let them win outside, and the elders of the Argives entreated  
my son, and named the many glorious gifts they would give him.  
But at that time he refused himself to fight the death from them; 450  
nevertheless he put his own armour upon Patroklos  
and sent him into the fighting, and gave many men to go with him.  
All day they fought about the Skaian Gates, and on that day  
they would have stormed the city, if only Phoibos Apollo  
had not killed the fighting son of Menoitios there in the first  
ranks 455

after he had wrought much damage, and given the glory to Hektor.  
Therefore now I come to your knees; so might you be willing  
to give me for my short-lived son a shield and a helmet  
and two beautiful greaves fitted with clasps for the ankles  
and a corselet. What he had was lost with his steadfast companion  
when the Trojans killed him. Now my son lies on the ground, heart  
sorrowing.' 461

Hearing her the renowned smith of the strong arms answered her:  
'Do not fear. Let not these things be a thought in your mind.  
And I wish that I could hide him away from death and its sorrow  
at that time when his hard fate comes upon him, as surely 465  
as there shall be fine armour for him, such as another  
man out of many men shall wonder at, when he looks on it.'

So he spoke, and left her there, and went to his bellows.  
He turned these toward the fire and gave them their orders for  
working.

And the bellows, all twenty of them, blew on the crucibles, 470  
from all directions blasting forth wind to blow the flames high  
now as he hurried to be at this place and now at another,  
wherever Hephaistos might wish them to blow, and the work went  
forward.

He cast on the fire bronze which is weariless, and tin with it  
and valuable gold, and silver, and thereafter set forth 475  
upon its standard the great anvil, and gripped in one hand  
the ponderous hammer, while in the other he grasped the pincers.

First of all he forged a shield that was huge and heavy,  
elaborating it about, and threw around it a shining

triple rim that glittered, and the shield strap was cast of silver. 480  
 There were five folds composing the shield itself, and upon it  
 he elaborated many things in his skill and craftsmanship.

He made the earth upon it, and the sky, and the sea's water,  
 and the tireless sun, and the moon waxing into her fullness,  
 and on it all the constellations that festoon the heavens, 485  
 the Pleiades and the Hyades and the strength of Orion  
 and the Bear, whom men give also the name of the Wagon,  
 who turns about in a fixed place and looks at Orion  
 and she alone is never plunged in the wash of the Ocean.

On it he wrought in all their beauty two cities of mortal 490  
 men. And there were marriages in one, and festivals.  
 They were leading the brides along the city from their maiden  
 chambers

under the flaring of torches, and the loud bride song was arising.  
 The young men followed the circles of the dance, and among them  
 the flutes and lyres kept up their clamour as in the meantime 495  
 the women standing each at the door of her court admired them.  
 The people were assembled in the market place, where a quarrel  
 had arisen, and two men were disputing over the blood price  
 for a man who had been killed. One man promised full restitution  
 in a public statement, but the other refused and would accept  
 nothing. 500

Both then made for an arbitrator, to have a decision;  
 and people were speaking up on either side, to help both men.  
 But the heralds kept the people in hand, as meanwhile the elders  
 were in session on benches of polished stone in the sacred circle  
 and held in their hands the staves of the heralds who lift their  
 voices. 505

The two men rushed before these, and took turns speaking their  
 cases,  
 and between them lay on the ground two talents of gold, to be given  
 to that judge who in this case spoke the straightest opinion.

But around the other city were lying two forces of armed men  
 shining in their war gear. For one side counsel was divided 510  
 whether to storm and sack, or share between both sides the property  
 and all the possessions the lovely citadel held hard within it.  
 But the city's people were not giving way, and armed for an ambush.  
 Their beloved wives and their little children stood on the rampart  
 to hold it, and with them the men with age upon them, but mean-  
 while 515

the others went out. And Ares led them, and Pallas Athene.

487. *Bear*: the Big Dipper. It is a female bear (*Ursa Major*), hence "she" in  
 l. 489.

These were gold, both, and golden raiment upon them, and they were

beautiful and huge in their armour, being divinities,  
and conspicuous from afar, but the people around them were smaller.  
These, when they were come to the place that was set for their  
ambush,

520

in a river, where there was a watering place for all animals,  
there they sat down in place shrouding themselves in the bright  
bronze.

But apart from these were sitting two men to watch for the rest of  
them

and waiting until they could see the sheep and the shambling cattle,  
who appeared presently, and two herdsmen went along with them  
playing happily on pipes, and took no thought of the treachery.

526

Those others saw them, and made a rush, and quickly thereafter  
cut off on both sides the herds of cattle and the beautiful  
flocks of shining sheep, and killed the shepherds upon them.

But the other army, as soon as they heard the uproar arising  
from the cattle, as they sat in their councils, suddenly mounted  
behind their light-foot horses, and went after, and soon overtook  
them.

530

These stood their ground and fought a battle by the banks of the  
river,

and they were making casts at each other with their spears bronze-  
headed;

and Hate was there with Confusion among them, and Death the  
destructive;

535

she was holding a live man with a new wound, and another  
one unhurt, and dragged a dead man by the feet through the carnage.  
The clothing upon her shoulders showed strong red with the men's  
blood.

All closed together like living men and fought with each other  
and dragged away from each other the corpses of those who had  
fallen.

540

He made upon it a soft field, the pride of the tilled land,  
wide and triple-ploughed, with many ploughmen upon it  
who wheeled their teams at the turn and drove them in either  
direction.

And as these making their turn would reach the end-strip of the  
field,

a man would come up to them at this point and hand them a  
flagon

545

of honey-sweet wine, and they would turn again to the furrows  
in their haste to come again to the end-strip of the deep field.

The earth darkened behind them and looked like earth that has  
been ploughed

though it was gold. Such was the wonder of the shield's forging.

He made on it the precinct of a king, where the labourers <sup>550</sup>  
were reaping, with the sharp reaping hooks in their hands. Of the  
cut swathes

some fell along the lines of reaping, one after another,  
while the sheaf-binders caught up others and tied them with bind-  
ropes.

There were three sheaf-binders who stood by, and behind them  
were children picking up the cut swathes, and filled their arms with  
them <sup>555</sup>

and carried and gave them always; and by them the king in silence  
and holding his staff stood near the line of the reapers, happily.

And apart and under a tree the heralds made a feast ready  
and trimmed a great ox they had slaughtered. Meanwhile the women  
scattered, for the workmen to eat, abundant white barley. <sup>560</sup>

He made on it a great vineyard heavy with clusters,  
lovely and in gold, but the grapes upon it were darkened  
and the vines themselves stood out through poles of silver. About  
them

he made a field-ditch of dark metal, and drove all around this  
a fence of tin; and there was only one path to the vineyard, <sup>565</sup>  
and along it ran the grape-bearers for the vineyard's stripping.

Young girls and young men, in all their light-hearted innocence,  
carried the kind, sweet fruit away in their woven baskets,  
and in their midst a youth with a singing lyre played charmingly  
upon it for them, and sang the beautiful song for Linos <sup>570</sup>  
in a light voice, and they followed him, and with singing and  
whistling

and light dance-steps of their feet kept time to the music.

He made upon it a herd of horn-straight oxen. The cattle  
were wrought of gold and of tin, and thronged in speed and with  
lowing

out of the dung of the farmyard to a pasturing place by a sounding  
river, and beside the moving field of a reed bed. <sup>576</sup>

The herdsmen were of gold who went along with the cattle,  
four of them, and nine dogs shifting their feet followed them.

But among the foremost of the cattle two formidable lions  
had caught hold of a bellowing bull, and he with loud lowings <sup>580</sup>  
was dragged away, as the dogs and the young men went in pursuit  
of him.

But the two lions, breaking open the hide of the great ox,

570. *song for Linos*: an ancient folk song commemorating Linos, the favorite of Apollo.



gulped the black blood and the inward guts, as meanwhile the  
herdsmen

were in the act of setting and urging the quick dogs on them.

But they, before they could get their teeth in, turned back from  
the lions,

585

but would come and take their stand very close, and bayed, and kept  
clear.

And the renowned smith of the strong arms made on it a meadow  
large and in a lovely valley for the glimmering sheepflocks,  
with dwelling places upon it, and covered shelters, and sheepfolds.

And the renowned smith of the strong arms made elaborate on  
it

590

a dancing floor, like that which once in the wide spaces of Knosos  
Daidalos built for Ariadne of the lovely tresses.

And there were young men on it and young girls, sought for their  
beauty

with gifts of oxen, dancing, and holding hands at the wrist. These  
wore, the maidens long light robes, but the men wore tunics

595

of finespun work and shining softly, touched with olive oil.

And the girls wore fair garlands on their heads, while the young men  
carried golden knives that hung from sword-belts of silver.

At whiles on their understanding feet they would run very lightly,

as when a potter crouching makes trial of his wheel, holding

600

it close in his hands, to see if it will run smooth. At another

time they would form rows, and run, rows crossing each other.

And around the lovely chorus of dancers stood a great multitude

happily watching, while among the dancers two acrobats

led the measures of song and dance revolving among them.

605

He made on it the great strength of the Ocean River

which ran around the uttermost rim of the shield's strong structure.

Then after he had wrought this shield, which was huge and heavy,

he wrought for him a corselet brighter than fire in its shining,

and wrought him a helmet, massive and fitting close to his

temples,

610

lovely and intricate work, and laid a gold top-ridge along it,

and out of pliable tin wrought him leg-armour. Thereafter

when the renowned smith of the strong arms had finished the

armour

he lifted it and laid it before the mother of Achilleus.

And she like a hawk came sweeping down from the snows of

Olympos

615

and carried with her the shining armour, the gift of Hephaistos.

591. *Knosos*: in Crete.

592. *Daidalos*: the "fabulous artificer" who built the labyrinth and, with

his son Icarus, escaped from Crete on wings. *Ariadne*: daughter of Minos, king of Crete.

*Book XIX*

Now Dawn the yellow-robed arose from the river of Ocean to carry her light to men and to immortals. And Thetis came to the ships and carried with her the gifts of Hephaistos. She found her beloved son lying in the arms of Patroklos crying shrill, and his companions in their numbers about him mourned. She, shining among divinities, stood there beside them. She clung to her son's hand and called him by name and spoke to him:

'My child, now, though we grieve for him, we must let this man lie dead, in the way he first was killed through the gods' designing. Accept rather from me the glorious arms of Hephaistos, so splendid, and such as no man has ever worn on his shoulders.'

The goddess spoke so, and set down the armour on the ground before Achilleus, and all its elaboration clashed loudly. Trembling took hold of all the Myrmidons. None had the courage to look straight at it. They were afraid of it. Only Achilleus looked, and as he looked the anger came harder upon him and his eyes glittered terribly under his lids, like sunflare. He was glad, holding in his hands the shining gifts of Hephaistos. But when he had satisfied his heart with looking at the intricate armour, he spoke to his mother and addressed her in winged words:

'My mother, the god has given me these weapons; they are such as are the work of immortals. No mortal man could have made them. Therefore now I shall arm myself in them. Yet I am sadly afraid, during this time, for the warlike son of Menoitios that flies might get into the wounds beaten by bronze in his body and breed worms in them, and these make foul the body, seeing that the life is killed in him, and that all his flesh may be rotted.'

In turn the goddess Thetis the silver-footed answered him: 'My child, no longer let these things be a care in your mind. I shall endeavour to drive from him the swarming and fierce things,

those flies, which feed upon the bodies of men who have perished; and although he lie here till a year has gone to fulfilment, still his body shall be as it was, or firmer than ever.

Go then and summon into assembly the fighting Achaïans, and unsay your anger against Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, and arm at once for the fighting, and put your war strength upon you.'

She spoke so, and drove the strength of great courage into him; and meanwhile through the nostrils of Patroklos she distilled ambrosia and red nectar, so that his flesh might not spoil.

39. *ambrosia*: the food of the gods.

But he, brilliant Achilles, walked along by the sea-shore  
crying his terrible cry, and stirred up the fighting Achaians.  
And even those who before had stayed where the ships were  
assembled,

they who were helmsmen of the ships and handled the steering oar,  
they who were stewards among the ships and dispensers of rations,  
even these came then to assembly, since now Achilles  
had appeared, after staying so long from the sorrowful battle.

And there were two who came limping among them, henchmen of  
Ares

both, Tydeus' son the staunch in battle, and brilliant Odysseus,  
leaning on spears, since they had the pain of their wounds yet upon  
them,

and came and took their seats in the front rank of those assembled.

And last of them came in the lord of men Agamemnon  
with a wound on him, seeing that Koön, the son of Antenor,  
had stabbed him with the bronze edge of the spear in the strong  
encounter.

But now, when all the Achaians were in one body together,  
Achilles of the swift feet stood up before them and spoke to  
them:

'Son of Atreus, was this after all the better way for  
both, for you and me, that we, for all our hearts' sorrow,  
quarrelled together for the sake of a girl in soul-perishing hatred?  
I wish Artemis had killed her beside the ships with an arrow  
on that day when I destroyed Lyrnessos and took her.

For thus not all these too many Achaians would have bitten  
the dust, by enemy hands, when I was away in my anger.  
This way was better for the Trojans and Hektor; yet I think  
the Achaians will too long remember this quarrel between us.  
Still, we will let all this be a thing of the past, though it hurts us,  
and beat down by constraint the anger that rises inside us.

Now I am making an end of my anger. It does not become me  
unrelentingly to rage on. Come, then! The more quickly  
drive on the flowing-haired Achaians into the fighting,  
so that I may go up against the Trojans, and find out  
if they still wish to sleep out beside the ships. I think rather  
they will be glad to rest where they are, whoever among them  
gets away with his life from the fury of our spears' onset.'

He spoke, and the strong-greaved Achaians were pleased to hear  
him

and how the great-hearted son of Pelcus unsaid his anger.  
Now among them spoke forth the lord of men Agamemnon  
from the place where he was sitting, and did not stand up among  
them:

'Fighting men and friends, o Danaans, henchmen of Ares:  
 it is well to listen to the speaker, it is not becoming  
 to break in on him. This will be hard for him, though he be able. 80  
 How among the great murmur of people shall anyone listen  
 or speak either? A man, though he speak very clearly, is baffled.  
 I shall address the son of Peleus; yet all you other  
 Argives listen also, and give my word careful attention.  
 This is the word the Achaians have spoken often against me 85  
 and found fault with me in it, yet I am not responsible  
 but Zeus is, and Destiny, and Erinys the mist-walking  
 who in assembly caught my heart in the savage delusion  
 on that day I myself stripped from him the prize of Achilles.  
 Yet what could I do? It is the god who accomplishes all things. 90  
 Delusion is the elder daughter of Zeus, the accursed  
 who deludes all; her feet are delicate and they step not  
 on the firm earth, but she walks the air above men's heads  
 and leads them astray. She has entangled others before me.  
 Yes, for once Zeus even was deluded, though men say 95  
 he is the highest one of gods and mortals. Yet Hera  
 who is female deluded even Zeus in her craftiness  
 on that day when in strong wall-circled Thebe Alkmene  
 was at her time to bring forth the strength of Herakles. Therefore  
 Zeus spoke forth and made a vow before all the immortals: 100  
 "Hear me, all you gods and all you goddesses: hear me  
 while I speak forth what the heart within my breast urges.  
 This day Eileithyia of women's child-pains shall bring forth  
 a man to the light who, among the men sprung of the generation  
 of my blood, shall be lord over all those dwelling about him." 105  
 Then in guileful intention the lady Hera said to him:  
 "You will be a liar, not put fulfilment on what you have spoken.  
 Come, then, lord of Olympos, and swear before me a strong oath  
 that he shall be lord over all those dwelling about him  
 who this day shall fall between the feet of a woman, 110  
 that man who is born of the blood of your generation." So Hera  
 spoke. And Zeus was entirely unaware of her falsehood,  
 but swore a great oath, and therein lay all his deception.  
 But Hera in a flash of speed left the horn of Olympos  
 and rapidly came to Argos of Achaia, where she knew 115  
 was the mighty wife of Sthenelos, descended of Perseus.  
 And she was carrying a son, and this was the seventh month for her,  
 but she brought him sooner into the light, and made him premature,

87. *Erinys*: an avenger, a Fury. Here mentioned without reference to the Furies' proper function, simply as a power of darkness.

99. *Herakles*: son of Zeus (see note to Book XVIII, l. 117).

103. *Eileithyia*: the goddess who presided over human birth.

110. *fall between the feet of a woman*: be born.

116. *Perseus*: a son of Zeus.

and stayed the childbirth of Alkmene, and held back the birth pangs. She went herself and spoke the message to Zeus, son of Kronos: 120  
 "Father Zeus of the shining bolt, I will tell you a message for your heart. A great man is born, who will be lord over the Argives,

Eurystheus, son of Sthenelos, of the seed of Perseus, your generation. It is not unfit that he should rule over the Argives." She spoke, and the sharp sorrow struck at his deep heart. 125

He caught by the shining hair of her head the goddess Delusion in the anger of his heart, and swore a strong oath, that never after this might Delusion, who deludes all, come back to Olympos and the starry sky. So speaking, he whirled her about in his hand and slung her out of the starry heaven, 130 and presently she came to men's establishments. But Zeus would forever grieve over her each time that he saw his dear son doing some shameful work of the tasks that Eurystheus set him. So I in my time, when tall Hektor of the shining helm was forever destroying the Argives against the sterns of their vessels, 135

could not forget Delusion, the way I was first deluded. But since I was deluded and Zeus took my wits away from me, I am willing to make all good and give back gifts in abundance. Rise up, then, to the fighting and rouse the rest of the people. Here am I, to give you all those gifts, as many 140 as brilliant Odysseus yesterday went to your shelter and promised. Or if you will, hold back, though you lean hard into the battle, while my followers take the gifts from my ship and bring them to you, so you may see what I give to comfort your spirit.'

Then in answer to him spoke Achilleus of the swift feet: 145 'Son of Atreus, most lordly and king of men, Agamemnon, the gifts are yours to give if you wish, and as it is proper, or to keep with yourself. But now let us remember our joy in warcraft,

immediately, for it is not fitting to stay here and waste time nor delay, since there is still a big work to be done. 150 So can a man see once more Achilleus among the front fighters with the bronze spear wrecking the Trojan battalions. Therefore let each of you remember this and fight his antagonist.'

Then in answer to him spoke resourceful Odysseus: 'Not that way, good fighter that you are, godlike Achilleus. 155 Do not drive the sons of the Achaians on Ilion when they are hungry,

123. *Eurystheus*: He became king of Argos, and taskmaster of Herakles, who performed twelve great labors for him.

124. *your generation*: descended from Zeus through Perseus.

to fight against the Trojans, since not short will be the time of battle, once the massed formations of men have encountered together, with the god inspiring fury in both sides.

Rather tell the men of Achaia here by their swift ships, 160  
to take food and wine, since these make fighting fury and warcraft.  
For a man will not have strength to fight his way forward all day  
long until the sun goes down if he is starved for food. Even  
though in his heart he be very passionate for the battle,  
yet without his knowing it his limbs will go heavy, and hunger 165  
and thirst will catch up with him and cumber his knees as he moves  
on.

But when a man has been well filled with wine and with eating  
and then does battle all day long against the enemy,  
why, then the heart inside him is full of cheer, nor do his limbs  
get weary, until all are ready to give over the fighting. 170  
Come then, tell your men to scatter and bid them get ready  
a meal; and as for the gifts, let the lord of men Agamemnon  
bring them to the middle of our assembly so all the Achaians  
can see them before their eyes, so your own heart may be pleased.  
And let him stand up before the Argives and swear an oath to you  
that he never entered into her bed and never lay with her 176  
as is natural for people, my lord, between men and women.  
And by this let the spirit in your own heart be made gracious.  
After that in his own shelter let him appease you,  
with a generous meal, so you will lack nothing of what is due you.  
And you, son of Atreus, after this be more righteous to another 181  
man. For there is no fault when even one who is a king  
appeases a man, when the king was the first one to be angry.'

Then in turn the lord of men Agamemnon answered him:  
'Hearing what you have said, son of Laertes, I am pleased with  
you. 185

Fairly have you gone through everything and explained it.  
And all this I am willing to swear to, and my heart urges me,  
and I will not be foresworn before the gods. Let Achilles  
stay here the while, though he lean very hard toward the work of  
the war god,

and remain the rest of you all here assembled, until the gifts come  
back from my shelter and while we cut our oaths of fidelity. 191  
And for you yourself, Odysseus, I give you this errand, this order,  
that you choose out excellent young men of all the Achaians  
and bring the gifts back here from my ship, all that you promised  
yesterday to Achilles, and bring the women back also. 195  
And in the wide host of the Achaians let Talthibios make ready

176. *her*: Briseis.

191. *cut our oaths*: "cut" refers to  
the killing of the animals sacrificed to

seal the oath.

196. *Talthibios*: Agamemnon's her-  
ald.

a boar for me, and dedicate it to Zeus and Helios.'

Then in answer to him spoke Achilleus of the swift feet:  
'Son of Atreus, most lordly and king of men, Agamemnon,  
at some other time rather you should busy yourself about these  
things,

when there is some stopping point in the fighting, at some time  
when there is not so much fury inside of my heart. But now  
as things are they lie there torn whom the son of Priam  
Hektor has beaten down, since Zeus was giving him glory,  
and then you urge a man to eating. No, but I would now  
drive forward the sons of the Achaians into the fighting  
starving and unfed, and afterwards when the sun sets  
make ready a great dinner, when we have paid off our defilement.  
But before this, for me at least, neither drink nor food shall  
go down my very throat, since my companion has perished  
and lies inside my shelter torn about with the cutting  
bronze, and turned against the forecourt while my companions  
mourn about him. Food and drink mean nothing to my heart  
but blood does, and slaughter, and the groaning of men in the hard  
work.'

Then in answer to him spoke resourceful Odysseus:  
'Son of Peleus, Achilleus, far greatest of the Achaians,  
you are stronger than I am and greater by not a little  
with the spear, yet I in turn might overpass you in wisdom  
by far, since I was born before you and have learned more things.  
Therefore let your heart endure to listen to my words.

When there is battle men have suddenly their fill of it  
when the bronze scatters on the ground the straw in most numbers  
and the harvest is most thin, when Zeus has poised his balance,  
Zeus, who is administrator to men in their fighting.

There is no way the Achaians can mourn a dead man by denying  
the belly. Too many fall day by day, one upon another,  
and how could anyone find breathing space from his labour?

No, but we must harden our hearts and bury the man who  
dies, when we have wept over him on the day, and all those  
who are left about from the hateful work of war must remember  
food and drink, so that afterwards all the more strongly  
we may fight on forever relentless against our enemies  
with the weariless bronze put on about our bodies. Let one not  
wait long for any other summons to stir on the people.

This summons now shall be an evil on anyone left behind  
by the ships of the Argives. Therefore let us drive on together  
and wake the bitter war god on the Trojans, breakers of horses.'

He spoke, and went away with the sons of glorious Nestor,

with Meges, the son of Phyleus, and Meriones, and Thoas, and Lykomedes, the son of Kreion, and Melanippos. These went on their way to the shelter of Atreus' son Agamemnon. 241

No sooner was the order given than the thing had been done. They brought back seven tripods from the shelter, those Agamemnon had promised, and twenty shining cauldrons, twelve horses. They brought back

immediately the seven women the work of whose hands was blameless, and the eighth of them was Briseis of the fair cheeks. 245

Odysseus weighed out ten full talents of gold and led them back, and the young men of the Achaians carried the other gifts. They brought these into the midst of assembly, and Agamemnon stood up, and Talthybios in voice like an immortal 250

stood beside the shepherd of the people with the boar in his hands. Atreus' son laid hands upon his work-knife, and drew it from where it hung ever beside the great sheath of his war sword, and cut first hairs away from the boar, and lifting his hands up to Zeus, prayed, while all the Argives stayed fast at their places in silence and in order of station, and listened to their king. 255

He spoke before them in prayer gazing into the wide sky: 'Let Zeus first be my witness, highest of the gods and greatest, and Earth, and Helios the Sun, and Furies, who underground avenge dead men, when any man has sworn to a falsehood, 260 that I have never laid a hand on the girl Briseis

on pretext to go to bed with her, or for any other reason, but she remained, not singled out, in my shelter.

If any of this is falsely sworn, may the gods give me many 264 griefs, all that they inflict on those who swear falsely before them.'

So he spoke, and with pitiless bronze he cut the boar's throat. Talthybios whirled the body about, and threw it in the great reach of the grey sea, to feed the fishes. Meanwhile Achilleus

stood up among the battle-fond Achaians, and spoke to them: 'Father Zeus, great are the delusions with which you visit men. 270

Without you, the son of Atreus could never have stirred so the heart inside my breast, nor taken the girl away from me against my will, and be in helplessness. No, but Zeus somehow wished that death should befall great numbers of the Achaians. Go now and take your dinner, so we may draw on the battle.' 275

So he spoke, and suddenly broke up the assembly.

Now these scattered away each man to his own ship. Meanwhile the great-hearted Myrmidons disposed of the presents.

They went on their way carrying them to the ship of godlike Achilleus, 279

and stowed the gifts in the shelters, and let the women be settled, while proud henchmen drove the horses into Achilleus' horse-herd.



And now, in the likeness of golden Aphrodite, Briseis  
 when she saw Patroklos lying torn with sharp bronze, folding  
 him in her arms cried shrilly above him and with her hands tore  
 at her breasts and her soft throat and her beautiful forehead. 285  
 The woman like the immortals mourning for him spoke to him:  
 'Patroklos, far most pleasing to my heart in its sorrows,  
 I left you here alive when I went away from the shelter,  
 but now I come back, lord of the people, to find you have fallen.  
 So evil in my life takes over from evil forever. 290  
 The husband on whom my father and honoured mother bestowed  
 me

I saw before my city lying torn with the sharp bronze,  
 and my three brothers, whom a single mother bore with me  
 and who were close to me, all went on one day to destruction.  
 And yet you would not let me, when swift Achilles had cut down  
 my husband, and sacked the city of godlike Mynes, you would not  
 let me sorrow, but said you would make me godlike Achilles'  
 wedded lawful wife, that you would take me back in the ships  
 to Phthia, and formalize my marriage among the Myrmidons.  
 Therefore I weep your death without ceasing. You were kind  
 always.' 300

So she spoke, lamenting, and the women sorrowed around her  
 grieving openly for Patroklos, but for her own sorrows  
 each. But the lords of Achaia were gathered about Achilles  
 beseeching him to eat, but he with a groan denied them:  
 'I beg of you, if any dear companion will listen 305  
 to me, stop urging me to satisfy the heart in me  
 with food and drink, since this strong sorrow has come upon me.  
 I will hold out till the sun goes down and endure, though it be hard.'

So he spoke, and caused the rest of the kings to scatter;  
 but the two sons of Atreus stayed with him, and brilliant Odys-  
 seus, 310

and Nestor, and Idomeneus, and the aged charioteer, Phoinix,  
 comforting him close in his sorrow, yet his heart would not  
 be comforted, till he went into the jaws of the bleeding battle.  
 Remembering Patroklos he sighed much for him, and spoke aloud:  
 'There was a time, ill fated, o dearest of all my companions, 315  
 when you yourself would set the desirable dinner before me  
 quickly and expertly, at the time the Achaians were urgent  
 to carry sorrowful war on the Trojans, breakers of horses.  
 But now you lie here torn before me, and my heart goes starved  
 for meat and drink, though they are here beside me, by reason 320  
 of longing for you. There is nothing worse than this I could suffer,  
 not even if I were to hear of the death of my father  
 who now, I think, in Phthia somewhere lets fall a soft tear

for bereavement of such a son, for me, who now in a strange land  
 make war upon the Trojans for the sake of accursed Helen; 325  
 or the death of my dear son, who is raised for my sake in Skyros  
 now, if godlike Neoptolemos is still one of the living.  
 Before now the spirit inside my breast was hopeful  
 that I alone should die far away from horse-pasturing Argos  
 here in Troy; I hoped you would win back again to Phthia 330  
 so that in a fast black ship you could take my son back  
 from Skyros to Phthia, and show him all my possessions,  
 my property, my serving men, my great high-roofed house.  
 For by this time I think that Peleus must altogether  
 have perished, or still keeps a little scant life in sorrow 335  
 for the hatefulness of old age and because he waits ever from me  
 the evil message, for the day he hears I have been killed.'

So he spoke, mourning, and the elders lamented around him  
 remembering each those he had left behind in his own halls.  
 The son of Kronos took pity on them as he watched them mourn-  
 ing 340

and immediately spoke in winged words to Athene:  
 'My child, have you utterly abandoned the man of your choice?  
 Is there no longer deep concern in your heart for Achilles?  
 Now he has sat down before the steep horned ships and is mourning  
 for his own beloved companion, while all the others 345  
 have gone to take their dinner, but he is fasting and unfed.  
 Go then to him and distil nectar inside his chest, and delicate  
 ambrosia, so the weakness of hunger will not come upon him.'

Speaking so, he stirred Athene, who was eager before this,  
 and she in the likeness of a wide-winged, thin-crying 350  
 hawk plummeted from the sky through the bright air. Now the  
 Achaians

were arming at once along the encampment. She dropped the  
 delicate  
 ambrosia and the nectar inside the breast of Achilles  
 softly, so no sad weakness of hunger would come on his knees,  
 and she herself went back to the close house of her powerful 355  
 father, while they were scattering out away from the fast ships.  
 As when in their thickness the snowflakes of Zeus come fluttering  
 cold beneath the blast of the north wind born in the bright sky,  
 so now in their thickness the pride of the helms bright shining  
 were carried out from the ships, and shields massive in the middle  
 and the corselets strongly hollowed and the ash spears were worn  
 forth. 361

The shining swept to the sky and all earth was laughing about them  
 under the glitter of bronze and beneath their feet stirred the thunder  
 of men, within whose midst brilliant Achilles helmed him.

A clash went from the grinding of his teeth, and his eyes glowed 365  
as if they were the stare of a fire, and the heart inside him  
was entered with sorrow beyond endurance. Raging at the Trojans  
he put on the gifts of the god, that Hephaistos wrought him with  
much toil.

First he placed along his legs the fair greaves linked with  
silver fastenings to hold the greaves at the ankles. 370  
Afterward he girt on about his chest the corsclet,  
and across his shoulders slung the sword with the nails of silver,  
a bronze sword, and caught up the great shield, huge and heavy  
next, and from it the light glimmered far, as from the moon.  
And as when from across water a light shines to mariners 375  
from a blazing fire, when the fire is burning high in the mountains  
in a desolate steading, as the mariners are carried unwilling  
by storm winds over the fish-swarming sea, far away from their loved  
ones;

so the light from the fair elaborate shield of Achilles  
shot into the high air. And lifting the helm he set it 380  
massive upon his head, and the helmet crested with horse-hair  
shone like a star, the golden fringes were shaken about it  
which Hephaistos had driven close along the horn of the helmet.  
And brilliant Achilles tried himself in his armour, to see  
if it fitted close, and how his glorious limbs ran within it, 385  
and the armour became as wings and upheld the shepherd of the  
people.

Next he pulled out from its standing place the spear of his father,  
huge, heavy, thick, which no one else of all the Achaians  
could handle, but Achilles alone knew how to wield it,  
the Pelian ash spear which Cheiron had brought to his father 390  
from high on Pelion, to be death for fighters in battle.  
Automedon and Alkimos, in charge of the horses,  
yoked them, and put the fair breast straps about them, and forced  
the bits home

between their jaws, and pulled the reins back against the compacted  
chariot seat, and one, Automedon, took up the shining 395  
whip caught close in his hand and vaulted up to the chariot,  
while behind him Achilles helmed for battle took his stance  
shining in all his armour like the sun when he crosses above us,  
and cried in a terrible voice on the horses of his father:  
'Xanthos, Balios, Bay and Dapple, famed sons of Podarge, 400  
take care to bring in another way your charioteer back  
to the company of the Danaans, when we give over fighting,  
not leave him to lie fallen there, as you did to Patroklos.'

Then from beneath the yoke the gleam-footed horse answered  
him.

Xanthos, and as he spoke bowed his head, so that all the mane  
 fell away from the pad and swept the ground by the cross-yoke;  
 the goddess of the white arms, Hera, had put a voice in him:  
 'We shall still keep you safe for this time, o hard Achilles.  
 And yet the day of your death is near, but it is not we  
 who are to blame, but a great god and powerful Destiny.  
 For it was not because we were slow, because we were careless,  
 that the Trojans have taken the armour from the shoulders of  
 Patroklos,

but it was that high god, the child of lovely-haired Leto,  
 who killed him among the champions and gave the glory to Hektor.  
 But for us, we two could run with the blast of the west wind  
 who they say is the lightest of all things; yet still for you  
 there is destiny to be killed in force by a god and a mortal.'

When he had spoken so the Furies stopped the voice in him,  
 but deeply disturbed, Achilles of the swift feet answered him:  
 'Xanthos, why do you prophesy my death? This is not for you.  
 I myself know well it is destined for me to die here  
 far from my beloved father and mother. But for all that  
 I will not stop till the Trojans have had enough of my fighting.'

He spoke, and shouting held on in the foremost his single-foot  
 horses.

[Achilleus' return to the fighting brought terror to the Trojans,  
 and turned the battle into a rout in which Achilleus killed every  
 Trojan that crossed his path. As he pursued Agenor, Apollo tricked  
 him by rescuing his intended victim (he spirited him away in a  
 mist) and assumed Agenor's shape to lead Achilleus away from the  
 walls of Troy. The Trojans took refuge in the city, all except Hektor.]

### Book XXII

So along the city the Trojans, who had run like fawns, dried  
 the sweat off from their bodies and drank and slaked their thirst,  
 leaning

along the magnificent battlements. Meanwhile the Achaians  
 sloping their shields across their shoulders came close to the rampart.  
 But his deadly fate held Hektor shackled, so that he stood fast  
 in front of Ilion and the Skaian gates. Now Phoibos  
 Apollo spoke aloud to Peleion: 'Why, son of Peleus,  
 do you keep after me in the speed of your feet, being mortal  
 while I am an immortal god? Even yet you have not  
 seen that I am a god, but strain after me in your fury.'

413. *child of . . . Leto*: Apollo.  
 417. *god . . . mortal*: Achilleus will  
 eventually fall by the hand of Paris as  
 a result of the intervention of Apollo.

418. *Furies*: One of the functions of  
 these goddesses was to ensure that all  
 the creatures of the universe observed  
 their proper limits.

Now hard fighting with the Trojans whom you stampeded means nothing

to you. They are crowded in the city, but you bent away here. You will never kill me. I am not one who is fated.'

Deeply vexed Achilles of the swift feet spoke to him:  
'You have balked me, striker from afar, most malignant of all gods,  
when you turned me here away from the rampart, else many Trojans  
would have caught the soil in their teeth before they got back into  
Ilion.

Now you have robbed me of great glory, and rescued these people lightly, since you have no retribution to fear hereafter.  
Else I would punish you, if only the strength were in me.'

He spoke, and stalked away against the city, with high thoughts in mind, and in tearing speed, like a racehorse with his chariot who runs lightly as he pulls the chariot over the flat land. Such was the action of Achilles in feet and quick knees.

The aged Priam was the first of all whose eyes saw him as he swept across the flat land in full shining, like that star which comes on in the autumn and whose conspicuous brightness far outshines the stars that are numbered in the night's darkening, the star they give the name of Orion's Dog, which is brightest among the stars, and yet is wrought as a sign of evil and brings on the great fever for unfortunate mortals.

Such was the flare of the bronze that girt his chest in his running. The old man groaned aloud and with both hands high uplifted beat his head, and groaned amain, and spoke supplicating his beloved son, who there still in front of the gateway stood fast in determined fury to fight with Achilles.

The old man stretching his hands out called pitifully to him: 'Hektor, beloved child, do not wait the attack of this man alone, away from the others. You might encounter your destiny beaten down by Peleion, since he is far stronger than you are.

A hard man: I wish he were as beloved of the immortal as loved by me. Soon he would lie dead, and the dogs and the vultures

would eat him, and bitter sorrow so be taken from my heart. He has made me desolate of my sons, who were brave and many. He killed them, or sold them away among the far-lying islands. Even now there are two sons, Lykaon and Polydoros, whom I cannot see among the Trojans pent up in the city, sons Laothoë a princess among women bore to me. But if these are alive somewhere in the army, then I can

46. *Lykaon*: he had already been youngest son, already killed by killed by Achilles. *Polydoros*: Priam's Achilles.

set them free for bronze and gold; it is there inside, since 50  
 Altes the aged and renowned gave much with his daughter.  
 But if they are dead already and gone down to the house of Hades,  
 it is sorrow to our hearts, who bore them, myself and their mother,  
 but to the rest of the people a sorrow that will be fleeting  
 beside their sorrow for you, if you go down before Achilleus. 55  
 Come then inside the wall, my child, so that you can rescue  
 the Trojans and the women of Troy, neither win the high glory  
 for Peleus' son, and yourself be robbed of your very life. Oh, take  
 pity on me, the unfortunate still alive, still sentient  
 but ill-starred, whom the father, Kronos' son, on the threshold of  
 old age 60  
 will blast with hard fate, after I have looked upon evils  
 and seen my sons destroyed and my daughters dragged away captive  
 and the chambers of marriage wrecked and the innocent children  
 taken  
 and dashed to the ground in the hatefulness of war, and the wives  
 of my sons dragged off by the accursed hands of the Achaians. 65  
 And myself last of all, my dogs in front of my doorway  
 will rip me raw, after some man with stroke of the sharp bronze  
 spear, or with spearcast, has torn the life out of my body;  
 those dogs I raised in my halls to be at my table, to guard my  
 gates, who will lap my blood in the savagery of their anger 70  
 and then lie down in my courts. For a young man all is decorous  
 when he is cut down in battle and torn with the sharp bronze, and  
 lies there  
 dead, and though dead still all that shows about him is beautiful;  
 but when an old man is dead and down, and the dogs mutilate  
 the grey head and the grey beard and the parts that are secret, 75  
 this, for all sad mortality, is the sight most pitiful.'

So the old man spoke, and in his hands seizing the grey hairs  
 tore them from his head, but could not move the spirit in Hektor.  
 And side by side with him his mother in tears was mourning  
 and laid the fold of her bosom bare and with one hand held out 80  
 a breast, and wept her tears for him and called to him in winged  
 words:

'Hektor, my child, look upon these and obey, and take pity  
 on me, if ever I gave you the breast to quiet your sorrow.  
 Remember all these things, dear child, and from inside the wall  
 beat off this grim man. Do not go out as champion against him, 85  
 o hard one; for if he kills you I can no longer  
 mourn you on the death-bed, sweet branch, o child of my bearing,  
 nor can your generous wife mourn you, but a big way from us  
 beside the ships of the Argives the running dogs will feed on you.'

So these two in tears and with much supplication called out 90  
to their dear son, but could not move the spirit in Hektor,  
but he awaited Achilles as he came on, gigantic.

But as a snake waits for a man by his hole, in the mountains,  
glutted with evil poisons, and the fell venom has got inside him,  
and coiled about the hole he stares malignant, so Hektor 95  
would not give ground but kept unquenched the fury within him  
and sloped his shining shield against the jut of the bastion.

Deeply troubled he spoke to his own great-hearted spirit:  
'Ah me! If I go now inside the wall and the gateway,  
Poulydamas will be first to put a reproach upon me, 100  
since he tried to make me lead the Trojans inside the city  
on that accursed night when brilliant Achilles rose up,  
and I would not obey him, but that would have been far better.  
Now, since by my own recklessness I have ruined my people,  
I feel shame before the Trojans and the Trojan women with  
trailing 105

robes, that someone who is less of a man than I will say of me:  
"Hektor believed in his own strength and ruined his people."  
Thus they will speak; and as for me, it would be much better  
at that time, to go against Achilles, and slay him, and come back,  
or else be killed by him in glory in front of the city. 110

Or if again I set down my shield massive in the middle  
and my ponderous helm, and lean my spear up against the rampart  
and go out as I am to meet Achilles the blameless  
and promise to give back Helen, and with her all her possessions,  
all those things that once in the hollow ships Alexandros 115  
brought back to Troy, and these were the beginning of the quarrel;  
to give these to Atreus' sons to take away, and for the Achaians  
also to divide up all that is hidden within the city,  
and take an oath thereafter for the Trojans in conclave  
not to hide anything away, but distribute all of it, 120  
as much as the lovely citadel keeps guarded within it;  
yet still, why does the heart within me debate on these things?

I might go up to him, and he take no pity upon me  
nor respect my position, but kill me naked so, as if I were  
a woman, once I stripped my armour from me. There is no 125  
way any more from a tree or a rock to talk to him gently  
whispering like a young man and a young girl, in the way  
a young man and a young maiden whisper together.

Better to bring on the fight with him as soon as it may be.  
'We shall see to which one the Olympian grants the glory.' 130

So he pondered, waiting, but Achilles was closing upon him  
in the likeness of the lord of battles, the helm-shining warrior,  
and shaking from above his shoulder the dangerous Pelian

ash spear, while the bronze that closed about him was shining  
like the flare of blazing fire or the sun in its rising. 135  
And the shivers took hold of Hektor when he saw him, and he  
could no longer

stand his ground there, but left the gates behind, and fled, frightened,

and Peleus' son went after him in the confidence of his quick feet.  
As when a hawk in the mountains who moves lightest of things flying  
makes his effortless swoop for a trembling dove, but she slips away  
from beneath and flies and he shrill screaming close after her 141  
plunges for her again and again, heart furious to take her;

so Achilles went straight for him in fury, but Hektor  
fled away under the Trojan wall and moved his knees rapidly.  
They raced along by the watching point and the windy fig tree 145  
always away from under the wall and along the wagon-way  
and came to the two sweet-running well springs. There there are  
double

springs of water that jet up, the springs of whirling Skamandros.  
One of these runs hot water and the steam on all sides  
of it rises as if from a fire that was burning inside it. 150

But the other in the summer-time runs water that is like hail  
or chill snow or ice that forms from water. Beside these  
in this place, and close to them, are the washing-hollows  
of stone, and magnificent, where the wives of the Trojans and their  
lovely

daughters washed the clothes to shining, in the old days 155  
when there was peace, before the coming of the sons of the  
Achaians.

They ran beside these, one escaping, the other after him.  
It was a great man who fled, but far better he who pursued him  
rapidly, since here was no festal beast, no ox-hide  
they strove for, for these are prizes that are given men for their  
running. 160

No, they ran for the life of Hektor, breaker of horses.  
As when about the turnposts racing single-foot horses  
run at full speed, when a great prize is laid up for their winning,  
at tripod or a woman, in games for a man's funeral,  
so these two swept whirling about the city of Priam 165  
in the speed of their feet, while all the gods were looking upon  
them.

First to speak among them was the father of gods and mortals:  
'Ah me, this is a man beloved whom now my eyes watch  
being chased around the wall; my heart is mourning for Hektor  
who has burned in my honour many thigh pieces of oxen 170  
on the peaks of Ida with all her folds, or again on the uttermost



part of the citadel, but now the brilliant Achilles drives him in speed of his feet around the city of Priam. Come then, you immortals, take thought and take counsel, whether to rescue this man or whether to make him, for all his valour, go down under the hands of Achilles, the son of Peleus.' 175

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athene spoke to him: 'Father of the shining bolt, dark misted, what is this you said? Do you wish to bring back a man who is mortal, one long since doomed by his destiny, from ill-sounding death and release him?' 180

Do it, then; but not all the rest of us gods shall approve you.'

Then Zeus the gatherer of the clouds spoke to her in answer: 'Tritogeneia, dear daughter, do not lose heart; for I say this not in outright anger, and my meaning toward you is kindly. Act as your purpose would have you do, and hold back no longer.' 185

So he spoke, and stirred on Athene, who was eager before this, and she went in a flash of speed down the pinnacles of Olympus.

But swift Achilles kept unremittingly after Hektor, chasing him, as a dog in the mountains who has flushed from his covert

a deer's fawn follows him through the folding ways and the valleys, 190

and though the fawn crouched down under a bush and be hidden he keeps running and noses him out until he comes on him; so Hektor could not lose himself from swift-footed Peleion.

If ever he made a dash right on for the gates of Dardanos to get quickly under the strong-built bastions, endeavouring that they from above with missiles thrown might somehow defend him, 195

each time Achilles would get in front and force him to turn back into the plain, and himself kept his flying course next the city.

As in a dream a man is not able to follow one who runs from him, nor can the runner escape, nor the other pursue him, 200

so he could not run him down in his speed, nor the other get clear.

How then could Hektor have escaped the death spirits, had not Apollo, for this last and uttermost time, stood by him

close, and driven strength into him, and made his knees light?

But brilliant Achilles kept shaking his head at his own people 205

and would not let them throw their bitter projectiles at Hektor

for fear the thrower might win the glory, and himself come second.

But when for the fourth time they had come around to the well springs

then the Father balanced his golden scales, and in them

183. *Tritogeneia*: a title of Athene; its origin and meaning are unknown.

he set two fateful portions of death, which lays men prostrate, 210  
 one for Achilles, and one for Hektor, breaker of horses,  
 and balanced it by the middle; and Hektor's death-day was heavier  
 and dragged downward toward death, and Phoibos Apollo forsook  
 him.

But the goddess grey-eyed Athene came now to Peleion  
 and stood close beside him and addressed him in winged words:

'Beloved

215

of Zeus, shining Achilles, I am hopeful now that you and I  
 will take back great glory to the ships of the Achaians, after  
 we have killed Hektor, for all his slakeless fury for battle.  
 Now there is no way for him to get clear away from us,  
 not though Apollo who strikes from afar should be willing to  
 undergo

220

much, and wallow before our father Zeus of the aegis.

Stand you here then and get your wind again, while I go  
 to this man and persuade him to stand up to you in combat.'

So spoke Athene, and he was glad at heart, and obeyed her,  
 and stopped, and stood leaning on his bronze-barbed ash spear.

Meanwhile

225

Athene left him there, and caught up with brilliant Hektor,  
 and likened herself in form and weariless voice to Deiphobos.

She came now and stood close to him and addressed him in winged  
 words:

'Dear brother, indeed swift-footed Achilles is using you roughly  
 and chasing you on swift feet around the city of Priam.

230

Come on, then; let us stand fast against him and beat him back  
 from us.'

Then tall Hektor of the shining helm answered her: 'Deiphobos,  
 before now you were dearest to me by far of my brothers,  
 of all those who were sons of Priam and Hekabe, and now  
 I am minded all the more within my heart to honour you,  
 you who dared for my sake, when your eyes saw me, to come forth  
 from the fortifications, while the others stand fast inside them.'

235

Then in turn the goddess grey-eyed Athene answered him:  
 'My brother, it is true our father and the lady our mother, taking  
 my knees in turn, and my companions about me, entreated  
 that I stay within, such was the terror upon all of them.

240

But the heart within me was worn away by hard sorrow for you.  
 But now let us go straight on and fight hard, let there be no sparing  
 of our spears, so that we can find out whether Achilles  
 will kill us both and carry our bloody war spoils back  
 to the hollow ships, or will himself go down under your spear.'

245

So Athene spoke and led him on by beguilement.

Now as the two in their advance were come close together,  
first of the two to speak was tall helm-glittering Hektor:  
'Son of Peleus, I will no longer run from you, as before this 250  
I fled three times around the great city of Priam, and dared not  
stand to your onfall. But now my spirit in turn has driven me  
to stand and face you. I must take you now, or I must be taken.  
Come then, shall we swear before the gods? For these are the highest  
who shall be witnesses and watch over our agreements. 255

Brutal as you are I will not defile you, if Zeus grants  
to me that I can wear you out, and take the life from you.  
But after I have stripped your glorious armour, Achilleus,  
I will give your corpse back to the Achaians. Do you do likewise.'

Then looking darkly at him swift-footed Achilleus answered: 260  
'Hektor, argue me no arguments. I cannot forgive you.

As there are no trustworthy oaths between men and lions,  
nor wolves and lambs have spirit that can be brought to agreement  
but forever these hold feelings of hate for each other,  
so there can be no love between you and me, nor shall there be 265  
oaths between us, but one or the other must fall before then  
to glut with his blood Ares the god who fights under the shield's  
guard.

Remember every valour of yours, for now the need comes  
hardest upon you to be a spearman and a bold warrior.

There shall be no more escape for you, but Pallas Athene 270  
will kill you soon by my spear. You will pay in a lump for all those  
sorrows of my companions you killed in your spear's fury.'

So he spoke, and balanced the spear far shadowed, and threw it;  
but glorious Hektor kept his eyes on him, and avoided it,  
for he dropped, watchful, to his knee, and the bronze spear flew  
over his shoulder 275

and stuck in the ground, but Pallas Athene snatched it, and gave it  
back to Achilleus, unseen by Hektor shepherd of the people.

But now Hektor spoke out to the blameless son of Peleus:  
'You missed; and it was not, o Achilleus like the immortals,  
from Zeus that you knew my destiny; but you thought so; or  
rather 280

you are someone clever in speech and spoke to swindle me,  
to make me afraid of you and forget my valour and war strength.  
You will not stick your spear in my back as I run away from you  
but drive it into my chest as I storm straight in against you;  
if the god gives you that; and now look out for my brazen 285  
spear. I wish it might be taken full length in your body.

And indeed the war would be a lighter thing for the Trojans  
if you were dead, seeing that you are their greatest affliction.'

So he spoke, and balanced the spear far shadowed, and threw it,

and struck the middle of Peleïdes' shield, nor missed it, 290  
 but the spear was driven far back from the shield, and Hektor was  
 angered

because his swift weapon had been loosed from his hand in a vain  
 cast.

He stood discouraged, and had no other ash spear; but lifting  
 his voice he called aloud on Deïphobos of the pale shield,  
 and asked him for a long spear, but Deïphobos was not near  
 him. 295

And Hektor knew the truth inside his heart, and spoke aloud:

'No use. Here at last the gods have summoned me deathward.

I thought Deïphobos the hero was here close beside me,  
 but he is behind the wall and it was Athene cheating me,  
 and now evil death is close to me, and no longer far away, 300  
 and there is no way out. So it must long since have been pleasing  
 to Zeus, and Zeus' son who strikes from afar, this way; though  
 before this

they defended me gladly. But now my death is upon me.

Let me at least not die without a struggle, inglorious,  
 but do some big thing first, that men to come shall know of it.' 305

So he spoke, and pulling out the sharp sword that was slung  
 at the hollow of his side, huge and heavy, and gathering  
 himself together, he made his swoop, like a high-flown eagle  
 who launches himself out of the murk of the clouds on the flat land  
 to catch away a tender lamb or a shivering hare; so 310

Hektor made his swoop, swinging his sharp sword, and Achilles  
 charged, the heart within him loaded with savage fury.

In front of his chest the beautiful elaborate great shield  
 covered him, and with the glittering helm with four horns  
 he nodded; the lovely golden fringes were shaken about it 315  
 which Hephaistos had driven close along the horn of the helmet.

And as a star moves among stars in the night's darkening,  
 Hesper, who is the fairest star who stands in the sky, such  
 was the shining from the pointed spear Achilles was shaking  
 in his right hand with evil intention toward brilliant Hektor. 320  
 He was eyeing Hektor's splendid body, to see where it might best  
 give way, but all the rest of the skin was held in the armour,  
 brazen and splendid, he stripped when he cut down the strength of  
 Patroklos;

yet showed where the collar-bones hold the neck from the shoulders,  
 the throat, where death of the soul comes most swiftly; in this  
 place 325

brilliant Achilles drove the spear as he came on in fury,

318. *Hesper*: the evening star.

and clean through the soft part of the neck the spearpoint was driven.

Yet the ash spear heavy with bronze did not sever the windpipe, so that Hektor could still make exchange of words spoken.

But he dropped in the dust, and brilliant Achilles vaunted above him:

'Hektor, surely you thought as you killed Patroklos you would be safe, and since I was far away you thought nothing of me, o fool, for an avenger was left, far greater than he was, behind him and away by the hollow ships. And it was I; and I have broken your strength; on you the dogs and the vultures

shall feed and foully rip you; the Achaians will bury Patroklos.'

In his weakness Hektor of the shining helm spoke to him:

'I entreat you, by your life, by your knees, by your parents, do not let the dogs feed on me by the ships of the Achaians, but take yourself the bronze and gold that are there in abundance,

those gifts that my father and the lady my mother will give you, and give my body to be taken home again, so that the Trojans and the wives of the Trojans may give me in death my rite of burning.'

But looking darkly at him swift-footed Achilles answered:

'No more entreating of me, you dog, by knees or parents.

I wish only that my spirit and fury would drive me to hack your meat away and eat it raw for the things that you have done to me. So there is no one who can hold the dogs off from your head, not if they bring here and set before me ten times and twenty times the ransom, and promise more in addition,

not if Priam son of Dardanos should offer to weigh out your bulk in gold; not even so shall the lady your mother who herself bore you lay you on the death-bed and mourn you: no, but the dogs and the birds will have you all for their feasting.'

Then, dying, Hektor of the shining helmet spoke to him:

'I know you well as I look upon you, I know that I could not persuade you, since indeed in your breast is a heart of iron.

Be careful now; for I might be made into the gods' curse upon you, on that day when Paris and Phoibos Apollo destroy you in the Skaian gates, for all your valour.'

He spoke, and as he spoke the end of death closed in upon him, and the soul fluttering free of the limbs went down into Death's house

mourning her destiny, leaving youth and manhood behind her.

Now though he was a dead man brilliant Achilles spoke to him:

'Die: and I will take my own death at whatever time  
Zeus and the rest of the immortals choose to accomplish it.' 365

He spoke, and pulled the brazen spear from the body, and laid it  
on one side, and stripped away from the shoulders the bloody  
armour. And the other sons of the Achaians came running about  
him,

and gazed upon the stature and on the imposing beauty 370  
of Hektor; and none stood beside him who did not stab him;  
and thus they would speak one to another, each looking at his  
neighbour:

'Sec now, Hektor is much softer to handle than he was  
when he set the ships ablaze with the burning firebrand.'

So as they stood beside him they would speak, and stab him. 375  
But now, when he had despoiled the body, swift-footed brilliant  
Achilleus stood among the Achaians and addressed them in winged  
words:

'Friends, who are leaders of the Argives and keep their counsel:  
since the gods have granted me the killing of this man  
who has done us much damage, such as not all the others  
together 380

have done, come, let us go in armour about the city  
to see if we can find out what purpose is in the Trojans,  
whether they will abandon their high city, now that this man  
has fallen, or are minded to stay, though Hektor lives no longer.  
Yet still, why does the heart within me debate on these things? 385  
There is a dead man who lies by the ships, unwept, unburied:  
Patroklos: and I will not forget him, never so long as  
I remain among the living and my knees have their spring beneath  
me.

And though the dead forget the dead in the house of Hades,  
even there I shall still remember my beloved companion. 390  
But now, you young men of the Achaians, let us go back, singing  
a victory song, to our hollow ships; and take this with us.  
We have won ourselves enormous fame; we have killed the great  
Hektor

whom the Trojans glorified as if he were a god in their city.'

He spoke, and now thought of shameful treatment for glorious  
Hektor. 395

In both of his feet at the back he made holes by the tendons  
in the space between ankle and heel, and drew thongs of ox-hide  
through them,  
and fastened them to the chariot so as to let the head drag,  
and mounted the chariot, and lifted the glorious armour inside it,  
then whipped the horses to a run, and they winged their way  
unreluctant. 400

A cloud of dust rose where Hektor was dragged, his dark hair was  
 falling [tumbled  
 about him, and all that head that was once so handsome was  
 in the dust; since by this time Zeus had given him over  
 to his enemies, to be defiled in the land of his fathers.

So all his head was dragged in the dust; and now his mother 405  
 tore out her hair, and threw the shining veil far from her  
 and raised a great wail as she looked upon her son; and his father  
 beloved groaned pitifully, and all his people about him  
 were taken with wailing and lamentation all through the city.  
 It was most like what would have happened, if all lowering 410  
 Ilion had been burning top to bottom in fire.

His people could scarcely keep the old man in his impatience  
 from storming out of the Dardanian gates; he implored them all,  
 and wallowed in the muck before them calling on each man  
 and naming him by his name: 'Give way, dear friends, 415  
 and let me alone though you care for me, leave me to go out  
 from the city and make my way to the ships of the Achaians.  
 I must be suppliant to this man, who is harsh and violent,  
 and he might have respect for my age and take pity upon it  
 since I am old, and his father also is old, as I am, 420  
 Pelcus, who begot and reared him to be an affliction  
 on the Trojans. He has given us most sorrow, beyond all others,  
 such is the number of my flowering sons he has cut down.

But for all of these I mourn not so much, in spite of my sorrow,  
 as for one, Hektor, and the sharp grief for him will carry me  
 downward 425  
 into Death's house. I wish he had died in my arms, for that way  
 we two, I myself and his mother who bore him unhappy,  
 might so have glutted ourselves with weeping for him and  
 mourning.'

So he spoke, in tears, and beside him mourned the citizens.  
 But for the women of Troy Hekabe led out the thronging 430  
 chant of sorrow: 'Child, I am wretched. What shall my life be  
 in my sorrows, now you are dead, who by day and in the night  
 were my glory in the town, and to all of the Trojans  
 and the women of Troy a blessing throughout their city. They  
 adored you

as if you were a god, since in truth you were their high honour 435  
 while you lived. Now death and fate have closed in upon you.'

So she spoke in tears but the wife of Hektor had not yet  
 heard: for no sure messenger had come to her and told her  
 how her husband had held his ground there outside the gates;  
 but she was weaving a web in the inner room of the high  
 house,

a red folding robe, and inworking elaborate figures.  
 She called out through the house to her lovely-haired handmaidens  
 to set a great cauldron over the fire, so that there would be  
 hot water for Hektor's bath as he came back out of the fighting;  
 poor innocent, nor knew how, far from waters for bathing; 445  
 Pallas Athene had cut him down at the hands of Achilleus.  
 She heard from the great bastion the noise of mourning and sorrow.  
 Her limbs spun, and the shuttle dropped from her hand to the  
 ground. Then

she called aloud to her lovely-haired handmaidens: 'Come here.  
 Two of you come with me, so I can see what has happened. 450  
 I heard the voice of Hektor's honoured mother; within me  
 my own heart rising beats in my mouth, my limbs under me  
 are frozen. Surely some evil is near for the children of Priam.  
 May what I say come never close to my ear; yet dreadfully  
 I fear that great Achilleus might have cut off bold Hektor 455  
 alone, away from the city, and be driving him into the flat land,  
 might put an end to that bitter pride of courage, that always  
 was on him, since he would never stay back where the men were in  
 numbers

but break far out in front, and give way in his fury to no man.'

So she spoke, and ran out of the house like a raving woman 460  
 with pulsing heart, and her two handmaidens went along with her.  
 But when she came to the bastion and where the men were gathered  
 she stopped, staring, on the wall; and she saw him  
 being dragged in front of the city, and the running horses  
 dragged him at random toward the hollow ships of the  
 Achaians. 465

The darkness of night misted over the eyes of Andromache.  
 She fell backward, and gasped the life breath from her, and far off  
 threw from her head the shining gear that ordered her headdress,  
 the diadem and the cap, and the holding-band woven together,  
 and the circlet, which Aphrodite the golden once had given her 470  
 on that day when Hektor of the shining helmet led her forth  
 from the house of Eëtion, and gave numberless gifts to win her.  
 And about her stood thronging her husband's sisters and the wives  
 of his brothers

and these, in her despair for death, held her up among them.  
 But she, when she breathed again and the life was gathered back  
 into her, 475

lifted her voice among the women of Troy in mourning:  
 'Hektor, I grieve for you. You and I were born to a single  
 destiny, you in Troy in the house of Priam, and I  
 in Thebe; underneath the timbered mountain of Plakos  
 in the house of Eëtion, who cared for me when I was little, 480



ill-fated he, I ill-starred. I wish he had never begotten me.  
 Now you go down to the house of Death in the secret places  
 of the earth, and left me here behind in the sorrow of mourning,  
 a widow in your house, and the boy is only a baby  
 who was born to you and me, the unfortunate. You cannot help  
 him, 485

Hektor, any more, since you are dead. Nor can he help you.  
 Though he escape the attack of the Achaians with all its sorrows,  
 yet all his days for your sake there will be hard work for him  
 and sorrows, for others will take his lands away from him. The day  
 of bereavement leaves a child with no agemates to befriend  
 him. 490

He bows his head before every man, his cheeks are bewept, he  
 goes, needy, a boy among his father's companions,  
 and tugs at this man by the mantle, that man by the tunic,  
 and they pity him, and one gives him a tiny drink from a goblet,  
 enough to moisten his lips, not enough to moisten his palate. 495  
 But one whose parents are living beats him out of the banquet  
 hitting him with his fists and in words also abuses him:  
 "Get out, you! Your father is not dining among us."

And the boy goes away in tears to his widowed mother,  
 Astyanax, who in days before on the knees of his father 500  
 would eat only the marrow or the flesh of sheep that was fattest.  
 And when sleep would come upon him and he was done with his  
 playing,

he would go to sleep in a bed, in the arms of his nurse, in a soft  
 bed, with his heart given all its fill of luxury.  
 Now, with his dear father gone, he has much to suffer: 505  
 he, whom the Trojans have called Astyanax, lord of the city,  
 since it was you alone who defended the gates and the long  
 walls.

But now, beside the curving ships, far away from your parents,  
 the writhing worms will feed, when the dogs have had enough of  
 you,

on your naked corpse, though in your house there is clothing  
 laid up 510

that is fine-textured and pleasant, wrought by the hands of women.  
 But all of these I will burn up in the fire's blazing,  
 no use to you, since you will never be laid away in them;  
 but in your honour, from the men of Troy and the Trojan women.'

So she spoke, in tears; and the women joined in her mourn-  
 ing. 515

[Achilleus buried Patroklos, and the Greeks celebrated the dead  
 hero's fame with athletic games, for which Achilleus gave the prizes.]

## Book XXIV

And the games broke up, and the people scattered to go away,  
 each man  
 to his fast-running ship, and the rest of them took thought of their  
 dinner  
 and of sweet sleep and its enjoyment; only Achilles  
 wept still as he remembered his beloved companion, nor did sleep  
 who subdues all come over him, but he tossed from one side to the  
 other

in longing for Patroklos, for his manhood and his great strength  
 and all the action he had seen to the end with him, and the  
 hardships

he had suffered; the wars of men; hard crossing of the big waters.  
 Remembering all these things he let fall the swelling tears, lying  
 sometimes along his side, sometimes on his back, and now again  
 prone on his face; then he would stand upright, and pace turning  
 in distraction along the beach of the sea, nor did dawn rising  
 escape him as she brightened across the sea and the beaches.  
 Then, when he had yoked running horses under the chariot  
 he would fasten Hektor behind the chariot, so as to drag him,  
 and draw him three times around the tomb of Menoitios' fallen  
 son, then rest again in his shelter, and throw down the dead man  
 and leave him to lie sprawled on his face in the dust. But Apollo  
 had pity on him, though he was only a dead man, and guarded  
 the body from all ugliness, and hid all of it under the golden  
 aegis, so that it might not be torn when Achilles dragged it.

So Achilles in his standing fury outraged great Hektor.  
 The blessed gods as they looked upon him were filled with com-  
 passion

and kept urging clear-sighted Argeiphontes to steal the body.  
 There this was pleasing to all the others, but never to Hera  
 nor Poseidon, nor the girl of the grey eyes, who kept still  
 their hatred for sacred Ilion as in the beginning,  
 and for Priam and his people, because of the delusion of Paris  
 who insulted the goddesses when they came to him in his courtyard  
 and favoured her who supplied the lust that led to disaster.  
 But now, as it was the twelfth dawn after the death of Hektor,  
 Phoibos Apollo spoke his word out among the immortals:  
 'You are hard, you gods, and destructive. Now did not Hektor  
 burn thigh pieces of oxen and unblemished goats in your honour?

24. *Argeiphontes*: a title of Hermes (its meaning is disputed). Hermes was the messenger of Zeus, and was also renowned for his trickery and thieving.

26. *girl of the grey eyes*: Athene.

28. *delusion of Paris*: He was appointed judge in a contest of beauty between Aphrodite, Hera, and Athene. All three goddesses offered bribes, but Aphrodite's promise to give him Helen proved the most attractive.

Now you cannot bring yourselves to save him, though he is only 35  
 a corpse, for his wife to look upon, his child and his mother  
 and Priam his father, and his people, who presently thereafter  
 would burn his body in the fire and give him his rites of burial.  
 No, you gods; your desire is to help this cursed Achilleus  
 within whose breast there are no feelings of justice, nor can 40  
 his mind be bent, but his purposes are fierce, like a lion  
 who when he has given way to his own great strength and his  
 haughty

spirit, goes among the flocks of men, to devour them.  
 So Achilleus has destroyed pity, and there is not in him  
 any shame; which does much harm to men but profits them  
 also. 45

For a man must some day lose one who was even closer  
 than this; a brother from the same womb, or a son. And yet  
 he weeps for him, and sorrows for him, and then it is over,  
 for the Destinies put in mortal men the heart of endurance.  
 But this man, now he has torn the heart of life from great  
 Hektor, 50

ties him to his horses and drags him around his beloved companion's  
 tomb; and nothing is gained thereby for his good, or his honour.  
 Great as he is, let him take care not to make us angry;  
 for see, he does dishonour to the dumb earth in his fury.'

Then bitterly Hera of the white arms answered him, saying: 55  
 'What you have said could be true, lord of the silver bow, only  
 if you give Hektor such pride of place as you give to Achilleus.  
 But Hektor was mortal, and suckled at the breast of a woman,  
 while Achilleus is the child of a goddess, one whom I myself  
 nourished and brought up and gave her as bride to her husband 60  
 Peleus, one dear to the hearts of the immortals, for you all  
 went, you gods, to the wedding; and you too feasted among them  
 and held your lyre, o friend of the evil, faithless forever.'

In turn Zeus who gathers the clouds spoke to her in answer:  
 'Hera, be not utterly angry with the gods, for there shall not 65  
 be the same pride of place given both. Yet Hektor also  
 was loved by the gods, best of all the mortals in Ilion.  
 I loved him too. He never failed of gifts to my liking.  
 Never yet has my altar gone without fair sacrifice,  
 the smoke and the savour of it, since that is our portion of  
 honour. 70

The stealing of him we will dismiss, for it is not possible  
 to take bold Hektor secretly from Achilleus, since always  
 his mother is near him night and day; but it would be better  
 if one of the gods would summon Thetis here to my presence  
 so that I can say a close word to her, and see that Achilleus 75

is given gifts by Priam and gives back the body of Hektor.'

He spoke, and Iris storm-footed sprang away with the message, and at a point between Samos and Imbros of the high cliffs plunged in the dark water, and the sea crashed moaning about her. She plummeted to sea floor like a lead weight which,  
mounted 80

along the horn of an ox who ranges the fields, goes downward and takes death with it to the raw-ravening fish. She found Thetis inside the hollow of her cave, and gathered about her sat the rest of the sea goddesses, and she in their midst was mourning the death of her blameless son, who so soon was  
destined 85

to die in Troy of the rich soil, far from the land of his fathers. Iris the swift-foot came close beside her and spoke to her: 'Rise, Thetis. Zeus whose purposes are infinite calls you.'

In turn Thetis the goddess, the silver-footed, answered her: 'What does he, the great god, want with me? I feel shamefast 90 to mingle with the immortals, and my heart is confused with sorrows.

But I will go. No word shall be in vain, if he says it.'

So she spoke, and shining among the divinities took up her black veil, and there is no darker garment. She went on her way, and in front of her rapid wind-footed Iris 95 guided her, and the wave of the water opened about them. They stepped out on the dry land and swept to the sky. There they found

the son of Kronos of the wide brows, and gathered about him sat all the rest of the gods, the blessed, who live forever. She sat down beside Zeus father, and Athene made a place for  
her. 100

Hera put into her hand a beautiful golden goblet and spoke to her to comfort her, and Thetis accepting drank from it. The father of gods and men began the discourse among them: 'You have come to Olympos, divine Thetis, for all your sorrow, with an unforgotten grief in your heart. I myself know this. 105 But even so I will tell you why I summoned you hither.

For nine days there has risen a quarrel among the immortals over the body of Hektor, and Achilleus, stormer of cities. They keep urging clear-sighted Argeiphontes to steal the body, but I still put upon Achilleus the honour that he has, guarding 110 your reverence and your love for me into time afterwards. Go then in all speed to the encampment and give to your son this message: tell him that the gods frown upon him, that beyond all other

78. *Samos and Imbros*: two islands in the north Aegean.

81. *horn of an ox*: a lure for big fish, a "plug."

immortals I myself am angered that in his heart's madness  
he holds Hektor beside the curved ships and did not give him 115  
back. Perhaps in fear of me he will give back Hektor.

Then I will send Iris to Priam of the great heart, with an order  
to ransom his dear son, going down to the ships of the Achaians  
and bringing gifts to Achilles which might soften his anger.'

He spoke and the goddess silver-foot Thetis did not disobey  
him 120

but descended in a flash of speed from the peaks of Olympus  
and made her way to the shelter of her son, and there found him  
in close lamentation, and his beloved companions about him  
were busy at their work and made ready the morning meal, and  
there

stood a great fleecy sheep being sacrificed in the shelter. 125

His honoured mother came close to him and sat down beside him,  
and stroked him with her hand and called him by name and spoke  
to him:

'My child, how long will you go on eating your heart out in sorrow  
and lamentation, and remember neither your food nor going  
to bed? It is a good thing even to lie with a woman 130  
in love. For you will not be with me long, but already

death and powerful destiny stand closely above you.

But listen hard to me, for I come from Zeus with a message.

He says that the gods frown upon you, that beyond all other  
immortals he himself is angered that in your heart's madness 135  
you hold Hektor beside the curved ships and did not redeem him.

Come, then, give him up and accept ransom for the body.'

Then in turn Achilles of the swift feet answered her:

'So be it. He can bring the ransom and take off the body,  
if the Olympian himself so urgently bids it.' 140

So, where the ships were drawn together, the son and his mother  
conversed at long length in winged words. But the son of Kronos  
stirred Iris to go down to sacred Ilion, saying:

'Go forth, Iris the swift, leaving your place on Olympus,  
and go to Priam of the great heart within Ilion, tell him 145

to ransom his dear son, going down to the ships of the Achaians  
and bringing gifts to Achilles which might soften his anger:

alone, let no other man of the Trojans go with him, but only  
let one elder herald attend him, one who can manage

the mules and the easily running wagon, so he can carry 150  
the dead man, whom great Achilles slew, back to the city.

Let death not be a thought in his heart, let him have no fear;  
such an escort shall I send to guide him, Argeiphontes

who shall lead him until he brings him to Achilles. And after  
he has brought him inside the shelter of Achilles, neither 155

will the man himself kill him, but will hold back all the others, for he is no witless man nor unwatchful, nor is he wicked, but will in all kindness spare one who comes to him as a suppliant.'

He spoke, and storm-footed Iris swept away with the message and came to the house of Priam. There she found outcry and mourning. 160

The sons sitting around their father inside the courtyard made their clothes sodden with their tears, and among them the old man

sat veiled, beaten into his mantle. Dung lay thick on the head and neck of the aged man, for he had been rolling in it, he had gathered and smeared it on with his hands. And his daughters 165

all up and down the house and the wives of his sons were mourning as they remembered all those men in their numbers and valour who lay dead, their lives perished at the hands of the Argives.

The messenger of Zeus stood beside Priam and spoke to him in a small voice, and yet the shivers took hold of his body: 170  
'Take heart, Priam, son of Dardanos, do not be frightened.

I come to you not eyeing you with evil intention but with the purpose of good toward you. I am a messenger of Zeus, who far away cares much for you and is pitiful.

The Olympian orders you to ransom Hektor the brilliant, to bring gifts to Achilles which may soften his anger: 175

alone, let no other man of the Trojans go with you, but only let one elder herald attend you, one who can manage the mules and the easily running wagon, so he can carry the dead man, whom great Achilles slew, back to the city. 180

Let death not be a thought in your heart, you need have no fear, such an escort shall go with you to guide you, Argeiphontes who will lead you till he brings you to Achilles. And after he has brought you inside the shelter of Achilles, neither will the man himself kill you but will hold back all the others; 185  
for he is no witless man nor unwatchful, nor is he wicked but will in all kindness spare one who comes to him as a suppliant.'

So Iris the swift-footed spoke and went away from him.

Thereupon he ordered his sons to make ready the easily rolling mule wagon, and to fasten upon it the carrying basket. 190

He himself went into the storeroom, which was fragrant and of cedar, and high-ceilinged, with many bright treasures inside it.

He called out to Hekabe his wife, and said to her:

'Dear wife, a messenger came to me from Zeus on Olympus, that I must go to the ships of the Achaians and ransom my dear son, 195

bringing gifts to Achilles which may soften his anger.  
Come then, tell me. What does it seem best to your own mind  
for me to do? My heart, my strength are terribly urgent  
that I go there to the ships within the wide army of the Achaians.'

So he spoke, and his wife cried out aloud, and answered him: 200  
'Ah me, where has that wisdom gone for which you were famous  
in time before, among outlanders and those you rule over?

How can you wish to go alone to the ships of the Achaians  
before the eyes of a man who has slaughtered in such numbers  
such brave sons of yours? The heart in you is iron. For if 205  
he has within his grasp and lays eyes upon you, that man  
who is savage and not to be trusted will not take pity upon you  
nor have respect for your rights. Let us sit apart in our palace  
now, and weep for Hektor, and the way at the first strong Destiny  
spun with his life line when he was born, when I gave birth to  
him, 210

that the dogs with their shifting feet should feed on him, far from  
his parents,

gone down before a stronger man; I wish I could set teeth  
in the middle of his liver and eat it. That would be vengeance  
for what he did to my son; for he slew him when he was no coward  
but standing before the men of Troy and the deep-girdled  
women 215

of Troy, with no thought in his mind of flight or withdrawal.'

In turn the aged Priam, the godlike, answered her saying:  
'Do not hold me back when I would be going, neither yourself be  
a bird of bad omen in my palace. You will not persuade me.

If it had been some other who ordered me, one of the mortals, 220  
one of those who are soothsayers, or priests, or diviners,

I might have called it a lie and we might rather have rejected it.  
But now, for I myself heard the god and looked straight upon her,  
I am going, and this word shall not be in vain. If it is my destiny  
to die there by the ships of the bronze-armoured Achaians, 225  
then I wish that. Achilles can slay me at once, with my own son  
caught in my arms, once I have my fill of mourning above him.'

He spoke, and lifted back the fair covering of his clothes-chest  
and from inside took out twelve robes surpassingly lovely  
and twelve mantles to be worn single, as many blankets, 230  
as many great white cloaks, also the same number of tunics.  
He weighed and carried out ten full talents of gold, and brought  
forth

two shining tripods, and four cauldrons, and brought out a goblet  
of surpassing loveliness that the men of Thrace had given him  
when he went to them with a message, but now the old man spared  
not 235

even this in his halls, so much was it his heart's desire  
to ransom back his beloved son. But he drove off the Trojans  
all from his cloister walks, scolding them with words of revilement:  
'Get out, you failures, you disgraces. Have you not also  
mourning of your own at home that you come to me with your sor-  
rows? 240

Is it not enough that Zeus, son of Kronos, has given me sorrow  
in losing the best of my sons? You also shall be aware of this  
since you will be all the easier for the Achaians to slaughter  
now he is dead. But, for myself, before my eyes look  
upon this city as it is destroyed and its people are slaughtered, 245  
my wish is to go sooner down to the house of the death god.'

He spoke, and went after the men with a stick, and they fled out-  
side

before the fury of the old man. He was scolding his children  
and cursing Helenos, and Paris, Agathon the brilliant,  
Pammon and Antiphonos, Polites of the great war cry, 250  
Deiphobos and Hippothoös and proud Dios. There were nine  
sons to whom now the old man gave orders and spoke to them  
roughly:

'Make haste, wicked children, my disgraces. I wish all of you  
had been killed beside the running ships in the place of Hektor.  
Ah me, for my evil destiny. I have had the noblest 255  
of sons in Troy, but I say not one of them is left to me,  
Mestor like a god and Troilos whose delight was in horses,  
and Hektor, who was a god among men, for he did not seem like  
one who was child of a mortal man, but of a god. All these  
Ares has killed, and all that are left me are the disgraces, 260  
the liars and the dancers, champions of the chorus, the plunderers  
of their own people in their land of lambs and kids. Well then,  
will you not get my wagon ready and be quick about it,  
and put all these things on it, so we can get on with our journey?'

So he spoke, and they in terror at the old man's scolding 265  
hauled out the easily running wagon for mules, a fine thing  
new-fabricated, and fastened the carrying basket upon it.  
They took away from its peg the mule yoke made of boxwood  
with its massive knob, well fitted with guiding rings, and brought  
forth

the yoke lashing (together with the yoke itself) of nine cubits 270  
and snugged it well into place upon the smooth-polished wagon-  
pole

at the foot of the beam, then slipped the ring over the peg, and  
lashed it

with three turns on either side to the knob, and afterwards  
fastened it all in order and secured it under a hooked guard.



Then they carried out and piled into the smooth-polished mule wagon 275

all the unnumbered spoils to be given for the head of Hektor, then yoked the powerful-footed mules who pulled in the harness and whom the Mysians gave once as glorious presents to Priam; but for Priam they led under the yoke those horses the old man himself had kept, and cared for them at his polished manger. 280

Now in the high house the yoking was done for the herald and Priam, men both with close counsels in their minds. And now came

Hekabe with sorrowful heart and stood close beside them carrying in her right hand the kind, sweet wine in a golden goblet, so that before they went they might pour a drink-offering. 285  
She stood in front of the horses, called Priam by name and spoke to him:

‘Here, pour a libation to Zeus father, and pray you may come back home again from those who hate you, since it seems the spirit within you drives you upon the ships, though I would not have it. Make your prayer then to the dark-misted, the son of Kronos 290  
on Ida, who looks out on all the Troad, and ask him for a bird of omen, a rapid messenger, which to his own mind is dearest of all birds and his strength is the biggest, one seen on the right, so that once your eyes have rested upon him you can trust in him and go to the ships of the fast-mounted Danaans. 295

But if Zeus of the wide brows will not grant you his own messenger, then I, for one, would never urge you on nor advise you to go to the Argive ships, for all your passion to do it.’

Then in answer to her again spoke Priam the godlike: 300  
‘My lady, I will not disregard this wherein you urge me. It is well to lift hands to Zeus and ask if he will have mercy.’

The old man spoke, and told the housekeeper who attended them to pour unstained water over his hands. She standing beside them and serving them held the washing-bowl in her hands, and a pitcher. He washed his hands and took the cup from his wife. He stood up 305

in the middle of the enclosure, and prayed, and poured the wine out looking up into the sky, and gave utterance and spoke, saying: ‘Father Zeus, watching over us from Ida, most high, most honoured: grant that I come to Achilleus for love and pity; but send me a bird of omen, a rapid messenger which to your own mind 310  
is dearest of all birds and his strength is biggest, one seen on the right, so that once my eyes have rested upon him I may trust in him and go to the ships of the fast-mounted Danaans.’

So he spoke in prayer, and Zeus of the counsels heard him.  
 Straightway he sent down the most lordly of birds, an eagle, 315  
 the dark one, the marauder, called as well the black eagle.  
 And as big as is the build of the door to a towering chamber  
 in the house of a rich man, strongly fitted with bars, of such size  
 was the spread of his wings on either side. He swept through the  
 city

appearing on the right hand, and the people looking upon him 320  
 were uplifted and the hearts made glad in the breasts of all of them.

Now in urgent haste the old man mounted into his chariot  
 and drove out through the forecourt and the thundering close. Be-  
 fore him

the mules hauled the wagon on its four wheels, Idaios  
 the sober-minded driving them, and behind him the horses 325  
 came on as the old man laid the lash upon them and urged them  
 rapidly through the town, and all his kinsmen were following  
 much lamenting, as if he went to his death. When the two men  
 had gone down through the city, and out, and come to the flat land,  
 the rest of them turned back to go to Ilion, the sons 330  
 and the sons-in-law. And Zeus of the wide brows failed not to notice  
 the two as they showed in the plain. He saw the old man and took  
 pity

upon him, and spoke directly to his beloved son, Hermes:  
 'Hermes, for to you beyond all other gods it is dearest  
 to be man's companion, and you listen to whom you will, go  
 now 335

on your way, and so guide Priam inside the hollow ships  
 of the Achaians, that no man shall see him, none be aware of him,  
 of the other Danaans, till he has come to the son of Peleus.'

He spoke, nor disobeyed him the courier, Argeiphontes.  
 Immediately he bound upon his feet the fair sandals 340  
 golden and immortal, that carried him over the water  
 as over the dry land of the main abreast of the wind's blast.  
 He caught up the staff, with which he mazes the eyes of those  
 mortals

whose eyes he would maze, or wakes again the sleepers. Holding  
 this in his hands, strong Argeiphontes winged his way onward 345  
 until he came suddenly to Troy and the Hellespont, and there  
 walked on, and there took the likeness of a young man, a noble,  
 with beard new grown, which is the most graceful time of young  
 manhood.

Now when the two had driven past the great tomb of Ilos  
 they stayed their mules and horses to water them in the river, 350  
 for by this time darkness had descended on the land; and the herald  
 made out Hermes, who was coming toward them at a short distance.

He lifted his voice and spoke aloud to Priam: 'Take thought,  
son of Dardanos. Here is work for a mind that is careful.  
I see a man; I think he will presently tear us to pieces. 355  
Come then, let us run away with our horses, or if not, then  
clasp his knees and entreat him to have mercy upon us.'

So he spoke, and the old man's mind was confused, he was badly  
frightened, and the hairs stood up all over his gnarled body  
and he stood staring, but the kindly god himself coming closer 360  
took the old man's hand, and spoke to him and asked him a ques-  
tion:

'Where, my father, are you thus guiding your mules and horses  
through the immortal night while other mortals are sleeping?  
Have you no fear of the Achaians whose wind is fury,  
who hate you, who are your enemies, and are near? For if one 365  
of these were to see you, how you are conveying so many  
treasures through the swift black night, what then could you think  
of?

You are not young yourself, and he who attends you is aged  
for beating off any man who might pick a quarrel with you.  
But I will do you no harm myself, I will even keep off 370  
another who would. You seem to me like a beloved father.'

In answer to him again spoke aged Priam the godlike:  
'Yes, in truth, dear child, all this is much as you tell me;  
yet still there is some god who has held his hand above me,  
who sent such a wayfarer as you to meet me, an omen 375  
of good, for such you are by your form, your admired beauty  
and the wisdom in your mind. Your parents are fortunate in you.'

Then in turn answered him the courier Argeiphontes:  
'Yes, old sir, all this that you said is fair and orderly.  
But come, tell me this thing and recite it to me accurately. 380  
Can it be you convey these treasures in all their numbers and  
beauty

to outland men, so that they can be still kept safe for you?  
Or are all of you by now abandoning sacred Ilion  
in fear, such a one was he who died, the best man among you,  
your son; who was never wanting when you fought against the  
Achaians.' 385

In answer to him again spoke aged Priam the godlike:  
'But who are you, o best of men, and who are your parents?  
Since you spoke of my ill-starred son's death, and with honour.'

Then in turn answered him the courier Argeiphontes:  
'You try me out, aged sir. You ask me of glorious Hektor 390  
whom many a time my eyes have seen in the fighting where men  
win

glory, as also on that time when he drove back the Argives

on their ships and kept killing them with the stroke of the sharp bronze,

and we stood by and wondered at him; for then Achilles would not let us fight by reason of his anger at Agamemnon. 395

For I am Achilles' henchman, and the same strong-wrought vessel brought us here; and I am a Myrmidon, and my father is Polyktor; a man of substance, but aged, as you are.

He has six sons beside, and I am the seventh, and I shook lots with the others, and it was my lot to come on this venture. 400

But now I have come to the plain away from the ships, for at day-break

the glancing-eyed Achaians will do battle around the city.

They chafe from sitting here too long, nor have the Achaians' kings the strength to hold them back as they break for the fighting.'

In answer to him again spoke aged Priam the godlike: 405

'If then you are henchman to Pelc'd Achilles, come, tell me the entire truth, and whether my son lies still beside the ships, or whether by now he has been hewn limb from limb and thrown before the dogs by Achilles.'

Then in turn answered him the courier Argeiphontes: 410

'Aged sir, neither have any dogs eaten him, nor have the birds, but he lies yet beside the ship of Achilles at the shelters, and as he was; now here is the twelfth dawn he has lain there, nor does his flesh decay, nor do worms feed on him, they who devour men who have fallen in battle. 415

It is true, Achilles drags him at random around his beloved companion's tomb, as dawn on dawn appears, yet he cannot mutilate him; you yourself can see when you go there how fresh with dew he lies, and the blood is all washed from him, nor is there any corruption, and all the wounds have been closed

up 420

where he was struck, since many drove the bronze in his body.

So it is that the blessed immortals care for your son, though he is nothing but a dead man; because in their hearts they loved him.'

He spoke, and the old man was made joyful and answered him, saying:

'My child, surely it is good to give the immortals their due gifts; because my own son, if ever I had one, never forgot in his halls the gods who live on Olympus. 425

Therefore they remembered him even in death's stage. Come, then, accept at my hands this beautiful drinking-cup, and give me protection for my body, and with the gods' grace be my escort 430 until I make my way to the shelter of the son of Peleus.'

In turn answered him the courier Argeiphontes:  
 'You try me out, aged sir, for I am young, but you will not  
 persuade me, telling me to accept your gifts when Achilles  
 does not know. I fear him at heart and have too much rever-  
 ence

435

to rob him. Such a thing might be to my sorrow hereafter.  
 But I would be your escort and take good care of you, even  
 till I came to glorious Argos in a fast ship or following  
 on foot, and none would fight you because he despised your escort.'

The kind god spoke, and sprang up behind the horses and  
 into

440

the chariot, and rapidly caught in his hands the lash and the guide  
 reins,  
 and breathed great strength into the mules and horses. Now after  
 they had got to the fortifications about the ships, and the ditch,  
 there

were sentries, who had just begun to make ready their dinner,  
 but about these the courier Argeiphontes drifted  
 sleep, on all, and quickly opened the gate, and shoved back  
 the door-bars, and brought in Priam and the glorious gifts on the  
 wagon.

445

But when they had got to the shelter of Peleus' son: a towering  
 shelter the Myrmidons had built for their king, hewing  
 the timbers of pine, and they made a roof of thatch above it  
 shaggy with grass that they had gathered out of the meadows;  
 and around it made a great courtyard for their king, with hedgepoles  
 set close together; the gate was secured by a single door-piece  
 of pine, and three Achaians could ram it home in its socket  
 and three could pull back and open the huge door-bar; three other  
 Achaians, that is, but Achilles all by himself could close it.

456

At this time Hermes, the kind god, opened the gate for the old man  
 and brought in the glorious gifts for Peleus' son, the swift-footed,  
 and dismounted to the ground from behind the horses, and spoke  
 forth:

'Aged sir, I who came to you am a god immortal,  
 Hermes. My father sent me down to guide and go with you.  
 But now I am going back again, and I will not go in  
 before the eyes of Achilles, for it would make others angry  
 for an immortal god so to face mortal men with favour.

460

But go you in yourself and clasp the knees of Peleion  
 and entreat him in the name of his father, the name of his mother  
 of the lovely hair, and his child, and so move the spirit within him.'

465

So Hermes spoke, and went away to the height of Olympus,  
 but Priam vaulted down to the ground from behind the horses

and left Idaios where he was, for he stayed behind, holding 470  
 in hand the horses and mules. The old man made straight for the  
 dwelling

where Achilles the beloved of Zeus was sitting. He found him  
 inside, and his companions were sitting apart, as two only,  
 Automedon the hero and Alkimos, scion of Ares,  
 were busy beside him. He had just now got through with his  
 dinner, 475

with eating and drinking, and the table still stood by. Tall Priam  
 came in unseen by the other men and stood close beside him  
 and caught the knees of Achilles in his arms, and kissed the hands  
 that were dangerous and manslaughtering and had killed so many  
 of his sons. As when dense disaster closes on one who has mur-  
 dered 480

a man in his own land, and he comes to the country of others,  
 to a man of substance, and wonder seizes on those who behold him,  
 so Achilles wondered as he looked on Priam, a godlike  
 man, and the rest of them wondered also, and looked at each other.  
 But now Priam spoke to him in the words of a suppliant: 485  
 'Achilleus like the gods, remember your father, one who  
 is of years like mine, and on the door-sill of sorrowful old age.  
 And they who dwell nearby encompass him and afflict him,  
 nor is there any to defend him against the wrath, the destruction.  
 Yet surely he, when he hears of you and that you are still liv-  
 ing, 490

is gladdened within his heart and all his days he is hopeful  
 that he will see his beloved son come home from the Troad.  
 But for me, my destiny was evil. I have had the noblest  
 of sons in Troy, but I say not one of them is left to me.  
 Fifty were my sons, when the sons of the Achaians came here. 495  
 Nineteen were born to me from the womb of a single mother,  
 and other women bore the rest in my palace; and of these  
 violent Ares broke the strength in the knees of most of them,  
 but one was left me who guarded my city and people, that one  
 you killed a few days since as he fought in defence of his coun-  
 try, 500

Hektor; for whose sake I come now to the ships of the Achaians  
 to win him back from you, and I bring you gifts beyond number.  
 Honour then the gods, Achilleus, and take pity upon me  
 remembering your father, yet I am still more pitiful;  
 I have gone through what no other mortal on earth has gone  
 through; 505

I put my lips to the hands of the man who has killed my children.'

So he spoke, and stirred in the other a passion of grieving  
 for his own father. He took the old man's hand and pushed him

gently away, and the two remembered, as Priam sat huddled  
at the feet of Achilles and wept close for manslaughtering  
Hektor

510

and Achilles wept now for his own father, now again  
for Patroklos. The sound of their mourning moved in the house.

Then

when great Achilles had taken full satisfaction in sorrow  
and the passion for it had gone from his mind and body, thereafter  
he rose from his chair, and took the old man by the hand, and set  
him

515

on his feet again, in pity for the grey head and the grey beard,  
and spoke to him and addressed him in winged words: 'Ah, un-  
lucky,

surely you have had much evil to endure in your spirit.

How could you dare to come alone to the ships of the Achaians  
and before my eyes, when I am one who have killed in such num-  
bers

520

such brave sons of yours? The heart in you is iron. Come, then,  
and sit down upon this chair, and you and I will even let  
our sorrows lie still in the heart for all our grieving. There is not  
any advantage to be won from grim lamentation.

Such is the way the gods spun life for unfortunate mortals,  
that we live in unhappiness, but the gods themselves have no sor-  
rows.

525

There are two urns that stand on the door-sill of Zeus. They are  
unlike

for the gifts they bestow: an urn of evils, an urn of blessings.

If Zeus who delights in thunder mingles these and bestows them  
on man, he shifts, and moves now in evil, again in good for-  
tune,

530

But when Zeus bestows from the urn of sorrows, he makes a failure  
of man, and the evil hunger drives him over the shining  
earth, and he wanders respected neither of gods nor mortals.

Such were the shining gifts given by the gods to Peleus  
from his birth, who outshone all men beside for his riches  
and pride of possession, and was lord over the Myrmidons. Thereto  
the gods bestowed an immortal wife on him, who was mortal.

535

But even on him the god piled evil also. There was not  
any generation of strong sons born to him in his great house  
but a single all-untimely child he had, and I give him  
no care as he grows old, since far from the land of my fathers  
I sit here in Troy, and bring nothing but sorrow to you and your  
children.

540

And you, old sir, we are told you prospered once; for as much  
as Lesbos, Makar's hold, confines to the north above it

and Phrygia from the north confines, and enormous Hellespont, <sup>545</sup>  
 of these, old sir, you were lord once in your wealth and your children.

But now the Uranian gods brought us, an affliction upon you,  
 forever there is fighting about your city, and men killed.

But bear up, nor mourn endlessly in your heart, for there is not  
 anything to be gained from grief for your son; you will never <sup>550</sup>  
 bring him back; sooner you must go through yet another sorrow.'

In answer to him again spoke aged Priam the godlike:  
 'Do not, beloved of Zeus, make me sit on a chair while Hektor  
 lies yet forlorn among the shelters; rather with all speed  
 give him back, so my eyes may behold him, and accept the ran-  
 som <sup>555</sup>

we bring you, which is great. You may have joy of it, and go back  
 to the land of your own fathers, since once you have permitted me  
 to go on living myself and continue to look on the sunlight.'

Then looking darkly at him spoke swift-footed Achilleus:  
 'No longer stir me up, old sir. I myself am minded <sup>560</sup>  
 to give Hektor back to you. A messenger came to me from Zeus,  
 my mother, she who bore me, the daughter of the sea's ancient.  
 I know you, Priam, in my heart, and it does not escape me  
 that some god led you to the running ships of the Achaians.  
 For no mortal would dare come to our encampment, not even <sup>565</sup>  
 one strong in youth. He could not get by the pickets, he could not  
 lightly unbar the bolt that secures our gateway. Therefore  
 you must not further make my spirit move in my sorrows,  
 for fear, old sir, I might not let you alone in my shelter,  
 suppliant as you are; and be guilty before the god's orders.' <sup>570</sup>

He spoke, and the old man was frightened and did as he told him.  
 The son of Pelcus bounded to the door of the house like a lion,  
 nor went alone, but the two henchmen followed attending,  
 the hero Automedon and Alkimos, those whom Achilleus  
 honoured beyond all companions after Patroklos dead. These  
 two <sup>575</sup>

now set free from under the yoke the mules and the horses,  
 and led inside the herald, the old king's crier, and gave him  
 a chair to sit in, then from the smooth-polished mule wagon  
 lifted out the innumerable spoils for the head of Hektor,  
 but left inside it two great cloaks and a finespun tunic <sup>580</sup>  
 to shroud the corpse in when they carried him home. Then Achilleus  
 called out to his serving-maids to wash the body and anoint it  
 all over; but take it first aside, since otherwise Priam  
 might see his son and in the heart's sorrow not hold in his anger  
 at the sight, and the deep heart in Achilleus be shaken to an-  
 ger; <sup>585</sup>



that he might not kill Priam and be guilty before the god's orders. Then when the serving-maids had washed the corpse and anointed it

with olive oil, they threw a fair great cloak and a tunic about him, and Achilles himself lifted him and laid him on a litter, and his friends helped him lift it to the smooth-polished

mule wagon. He groaned then, and called by name on his beloved companion: 590

'Be not angry with me, Patroklos, if you discover, though you be in the house of Hades, that I gave back great Hektor to his loved father, for the ransom he gave me was not unworthy. I will give you your share of the spoils, as much as is fitting.' 595

So spoke great Achilles and went back into the shelter and sat down on the elaborate couch from which he had risen, against the inward wall, and now spoke his word to Priam:

'Your son is given back to you, aged sir, as you asked it.

He lies on a bier. When dawn shows you yourself shall see him 600 as you take him away. Now you and I must remember our supper.

For even Niobe, she of the lovely tresses, remembered to eat, whose twelve children were destroyed in her palace, six daughters, and six sons in the pride of their youth, whom Apollo killed with arrows from his silver bow, being angered 605

with Niobe, and shaft-showering Artemis killed the daughters; because Niobe likened herself to Leto of the fair colouring and said Leto had borne only two, she herself had borne many; but the two, though they were only two, destroyed all those others. Nine days long they lay in their blood, nor was there anyone 610

to bury them, for the son of Kronos made stones out of the people; but on the tenth day the Uranian gods buried them.

But she remembered to eat when she was worn out with weeping.

And now somewhere among the rocks, in the lonely mountains, in Sipylos, where they say is the resting place of the goddesses 615

who are nymphs, and dance beside the waters of Acheloios, there, stone still, she broods on the sorrows that the gods gave her.

Come then, we also, aged magnificent sir, must remember to eat, and afterwards you may take your beloved son back to Ilion, and mourn for him; and he will be much lamented.' 620

So spoke fleet Achilles and sprang to his feet and slaughtered a gleaming sheep, and his friends skinned it and butchered it fairly, and cut up the meat expertly into small pieces, and spitted them, and roasted all carefully and took off the pieces.

Automedon took the bread and set it out on the table 625

607. *Leto*: mother of Apollo and Artemis.

617. *stone still*: She was changed into a rock.

in fair baskets, while Achilles served the meats. And thereon they put their hands to the good things that lay ready before them. But when they had put aside their desire for eating and drinking, Priam, son of Dardanos, gazed upon Achilles, wondering at his size and beauty, for he seemed like an outright vision of gods. Achilles in turn gazed on Dardanian Priam and wondered, as he saw his brave looks and listened to him talking. But when they had taken their fill of gazing one on the other, first of the two to speak was the aged man, Priam the godlike: 'Give me, beloved of Zeus, a place to sleep presently, so that we may even go to bed and take the pleasure of sweet sleep. For my eyes have not closed underneath my lids since that time when my son lost his life beneath your hands, but always I have been grieving and brooding over my numberless sorrows and wallowed in the muck about my courtyard's enclosure. Now I have tasted food again and have let the gleaming wine go down my throat. Before, I had tasted nothing.'

He spoke, and Achilles ordered his serving-maids and companions

to make a bed in the porch's shelter and to lay upon it fine underbedding of purple, and spread blankets above it and fleecy robes to be an over-all covering. The maid-servants went forth from the main house, and in their hands held torches, and set to work, and presently had two beds made. Achilles of the swift feet now looked at Priam and said, sarcastic: 'Sleep outside, aged sir and good friend, for fear some Achaian might come in here on a matter of counsel, since they keep coming and sitting by me and making plans; as they are supposed to. But if one of these come through the fleeting black night should notice you,

he would go straight and tell Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, and there would be delay in the ransoming of the body.

But come, tell me this and count off for me exactly how many days you intend for the burial of great Hektor. Tell me, so I myself shall stay still and hold back the people.'

In answer to him again spoke aged Priam the godlike: 'If you are willing that we accomplish a complete funeral for great Hektor, this, Achilles, is what you could do and give me pleasure. For you know surely how we are penned in our city, and wood is far to bring in from the hills, and the Trojans are frightened

badly. Nine days we would keep him in our palace and mourn him, and bury him on the tenth day, and the people feast by him, and on the eleventh day we would make the grave-barrow for him, and on the twelfth day fight again; if so we must do.'

Then in turn swift-footed brilliant Achilles answered him:

‘Then all this, aged Priam, shall be done as you ask it.

I will hold off our attack for as much time as you bid me.’ 670

So he spoke, and took the aged king by the right hand at the wrist, so that his heart might have no fear. Then these two, Priam and the herald who were both men of close counsel, slept in the place outside the house, in the porch’s shelter; but Achilles slept in the inward corner of the strong-built shelter, 675

and at his side lay Briseis of the fair colouring.

Now the rest of the gods and men who were lords of chariots slept nightlong, with the easy bondage of slumber upon them, only sleep had not caught Hermes the kind god, who pondered now in his heart the problem of how to escort King Priam 680 from the ships and not be seen by the devoted gate-wardens.

He stood above his head and spoke a word to him, saying:

‘Aged sir, you can have no thought of evil from the way you sleep still among your enemies now Achilles has left you unharmed. You have ransomed now your dear son and given much for him. 685

But the sons you left behind would give three times as much ransom for you, who are alive, were Atreus’ son Agamemnon to recognize you, and all the other Achaians learn of you.’

He spoke, and the old man was afraid, and wakened his herald, and lightly Hermes harnessed for them the mules and the horses 690

and himself drove them through the encampment. And no man knew of them.

But when they came to the crossing-place of the fair-running river,

of whirling Xanthos, a stream whose father was Zeus the immortal, there Hermes left them and went away to the height of Olympus, and dawn, she of the yellow robe, scattered over all earth, 695

and they drove their horses on to the city with lamentation and clamour, while the mules drew the body. Nor was any other aware of them at the first, no man, no fair-girdled woman, only Cassandra, a girl like Aphrodite the golden,

who had gone up to the height of the Pergamos. She saw 700 her dear father standing in the chariot, his herald and crier with him. She saw Hektor drawn by the mules on a litter.

She cried out then in sorrow and spoke to the entire city:

‘Come, men of Troy and Trojan women; look upon Hektor if ever before you were joyful when you saw him come back living 705

from battle; for he was a great joy to his city, and all his people.’

She spoke, and there was no man left there in all the city  
 nor woman, but all were held in sorrow passing endurance.  
 They met Priam beside the gates as he brought the dead in.  
 First among them were Hektor's wife and his honoured mother 716  
 who tore their hair, and ran up beside the smooth-rolling wagon,  
 and touched his head. And the multitude, wailing, stood there about  
 them.

And now and there in front of the gates they would have lamented  
 all day till the sun went down and let fall their tears for Hektor,  
 except that the old man spoke from the chariot to his people: 715  
 'Give me way to get through with my mules; then afterwards  
 you may sate yourselves with mourning, when I have him inside the  
 palace.'

So he spoke, and they stood apart and made way for the wagon.  
 And when they had brought him inside the renowned house, they  
 laid him

then on a carved bed, and seated beside him the singers 720  
 who were to lead the melody in the dirge, and the singers  
 chanted the song of sorrow, and the women were mourning beside  
 them.

Andromache of the white arms led the lamentation  
 of the women, and held in her arms the head of manslaughtering  
 Hektor:

'My husband, you were lost young from life, and have left me 725  
 a widow in your house, and the boy is only a baby  
 who was born to you and me, the unhappy. I think he will never  
 come of age, for before then head to heel this city  
 will be sacked, for you, its defender, are gone, you who guarded  
 the city, and the grave wives, and the innocent children, 730  
 wives who before long must go away in the hollow ships,  
 and among them I shall also go, and you, my child, follow  
 where I go, and there do much hard work that is unworthy  
 of you, drudgery for a hard master; or else some Achaian  
 will take you by hand and hurl you from the tower into hor-  
 rible 735

death, in anger because Hektor once killed his brother,  
 or his father, or his son; there were so many Achaians  
 whose teeth bit the vast earth, beaten down by the hands of Hektor.  
 Your father was no merciful man in the horror of battle.  
 Therefore your people are grieving for you all through their  
 city, 740

Hektor, and you left for your parents mourning and sorrow  
 beyond words, but for me passing all others is left the bitterness

735. *hurl . . . tower*: After the fall of Troy Astyanax was, in fact, hurled from  
 the walls.

and the pain, for you did not die in bed, and stretch your arms to me,

nor tell me some last intimate word that I could remember always, all the nights and days of my weeping for you.' 745

So she spoke in tears, and the women were mourning about her. Now Hekabe led out the thronging chant of their sorrow: 'Hektor, of all my sons the dearest by far to my spirit; while you still lived for me you were dear to the gods, and even in the stage of death they cared about you still. There were others 750

of my sons whom at times swift-footed Achilles captured, and he would sell them as slaves far across the unresting salt water into Samos, and Imbros, and Lemnos in the gloom of the mists.

You,

when he had taken your life with the thin edge of the bronze sword, he dragged again and again around his beloved companion's tomb, Patroklos', whom you killed, but even so did not bring him back to life. Now you lie in the palace, handsome and fresh with dew, in the likeness of one whom he of the silver bow, Apollo, has attacked and killed with his gentle arrows.' 755

So she spoke, in tears, and wakened the endless mourning. 760

Third and last Helen led the song of sorrow among them:

'Hektor, of all my lord's brothers dearest by far to my spirit: my husband is Alexandros, like an immortal, who brought me here to Troy; and I should have died before I came with him; and here now is the twentieth year upon me since I came 765 from the place where I was, forsaking the land of my fathers. In this time

I have never heard a harsh saying from you, nor an insult.

No, but when another, one of my lord's brothers or sisters, a fair-robbed

wife of some brother, would say a harsh word to me in the palace, or my lord's mother—but his father was gentle always, a father 770 indeed—then you would speak and put them off and restrain them by your own gentleness of heart and your gentle words. Therefore I mourn for you in sorrow of heart and mourn myself also and my ill luck. There was no other in all the wide Troad who was kind to me, and my friend; all others shrank when they saw me.' 775

So she spoke in tears, and the vast populace grieved with her.

Now Priam the aged king spoke forth his word to his people:

'Now, men of Troy, bring timber into the city, and let not your hearts fear a close ambush of the Argives. Achilles promised me, as he sent me on my way from the black ships, 780 that none should do us injury until the twelfth dawn comes.'

He spoke, and they harnessed to the wagons their mules and their oxen and presently were gathered in front of the city. Nine days they spent bringing in an endless supply of timber. But when the tenth dawn had shone forth with her light upon mortals, 785 they carried out bold Hektor, weeping, and set the body aloft a towering pyre for burning. And set fire to it.

But when the young dawn showed again with her rosy fingers, the people gathered around the pyre of illustrious Hektor. But when all were gathered to one place and assembled together, 790 first with gleaming wine they put out the pyre that was burning, all where the fury of the fire still was in force, and thereafter the brothers and companions of Hektor gathered the white bones up, mourning, as the tears swelled and ran down their cheeks. Then they laid what they had gathered up in a golden casket 795 and wrapped this about with soft robes of purple, and presently put it away in the hollow of the grave, and over it piled huge stones laid close together. Lightly and quickly they piled up the grave-barrow, and on all sides were set watchmen for fear the strong-greaved Achaians might too soon set upon them. 800

They piled up the grave-barrow and went away, and thereafter assembled in a fair gathering and held a glorious feast within the house of Priam, king under God's hand.

Such was their burial of Hektor, breaker of horses.

## AESCHYLUS

(524?-456 B.C.)

Agamemnon \*

[The myth on which this play is based is the story of a family which suffered through many generations from a series of acts of vengeance to which there was no foreseeable end as long as private vengeance was a recognized system of justice. Pelops, son of Tantalus, had two sons, Atreus and Thyestes, who quarreled when Thyestes seduced Atreus' wife. Atreus revenged himself by killing the children of Thyestes and serving their flesh to their father at a feast. One son of Thyestes, Aegisthus, escaped the slaughter, and lived to avenge his father. The sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and

\* First produced in the spring of 458 B.C. Our text is a translation by Louis MacNeice, published as *The Agamemnon*

of *Aeschylus*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1936.

Menelaus, were kings of Argos and Sparta respectively. Menelaus' wife was Helen, whose abduction caused the Trojan War. Agamemnon, leader of the Greek army, sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia to ensure the departure of the fleet when it lay wind-bound at the port of Aulis. His wife, Clytemnestra, committed adultery with Aegisthus while Agamemnon was away at Troy, and when her husband returned, with Aegisthus' aid, she murdered him. He was avenged seven years later by his son Orestes, who killed Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. (This action is the subject of the second play of the Aeschylean trilogy, the *Choephoroe*.) The *Agamemnon* begins with the moment when the news of the fall of Troy reaches Argos. The play was first produced in the open-air theater of Dionysus at Athens.]

Characters

WATCHMAN	HERALD
CHORUS OF OLD MEN	AGAMEMNON
OF THE CITY	CASSANDRA
CLYTEMNESTRA	ÆGISTHUS

SCENE—A space in front of the palace of Agamemnon in Argos. Night. A WATCHMAN on the roof of the palace.

WATCHMAN. The gods it is I ask to release me from this watch  
 A year's length now, spending my nights like a dog,  
 Watching on my elbow on the roof of the sons of Atreus  
 So that I have come to know the assembly of the nightly stars  
 Those which bring storm and those which bring summer to  
 men, 5  
 The shining Masters riveted in the sky—  
 I know the decline and rising of those stars.  
 And now I am waiting for the sign of the beacon,  
 The flame of fire that will carry the report from Troy,  
 News of her taking. Which task has been assigned me 10  
 By a woman of sanguine heart but a man's mind.  
 Yet when I take my restless rest in the soaking dew,  
 My night not visited with dreams—  
 For fear stands by me in the place of sleep  
 That I cannot firmly close my eyes in sleep— 15  
 Whenever I think to sing or hum to myself  
 As an antidote to sleep, then every time I groan  
 And fall to weeping for the fortunes of this house

2. *like a dog*: explained by the following words, "Watching on my elbow"; head on arms like a reclining dog.

3. *sons of Atreus*: Agamemnon and Menelaus.

8. *beacon*: Clytemnestra had arranged to be informed of the fall of Troy by a chain of signal fires stretching from Troy across the islands of the Aegean Sea to Argos.

11. *woman . . . mind*: Clytemnestra.

Where not as before are things well ordered now.  
 But now may a good chance fall, escape from pain, 20  
 The good news visible in the midnight fire.

[Pause. A light appears, gradually increasing, the light of the beacon.]

Ha! I salute you, torch of the night whose light  
 Is like the day, an earnest of many dances  
 In the city of Argos, celebration of Peace.  
 I call to Agamemnon's wife; quickly to rise 25  
 Out of her bed and in the house to raise  
 Clamour of joy in answer to this torch  
 For the city of Troy is taken—  
 Such is the evident message of the beckoning flame.  
 And I myself will dance my solo first 30  
 For I shall count my master's fortune mine  
 Now that this beacon has thrown me a lucky throw.  
 And may it be when he comes, the master of this house,  
 That I grasp his hand in my hand.  
 As to the rest, I am silent. A great ox, as they say, 35  
 Stands on my tongue. The house itself, if it took voice,  
 Could tell the case most clearly. But I will only speak  
 To those who know. For the others I remember nothing.

[Enter CHORUS OF OLD MEN. During the following chorus the day begins to dawn.]

CHORUS. The tenth year it is since Priam's high  
 Adversary, Menelaus the king 40  
 And Agamemnon, the double-throned and sceptred  
 Yoke of the sons of Atreus  
 Ruling in fee from God,  
 From this land gathered an Argive army  
 On a mission of war a thousand ships, 45  
 Their hearts howling in boundless bloodlust  
 In eagles' fashion who in lonely  
 Grief for nestlings above their homes hang  
 Turning in cycles  
 Beating the air with the oars of their wings, 50  
 Now to no purpose  
 Their love and task of attention.

But above there is One,  
 Maybe Pan, maybe Zeus or Apollo,

27. *Clamour of joy*: the triumphant cry with which the women of a city greeted the news of victory.

40. *Adversary, Menelaus*: Priam's

son Paris carried off Menelaus' wife Helen.

54. *Pan*: a god particularly associated with the forest and all forms of wild life.



Who hears the harsh cries of the birds  
Guests in his kingdom,  
Wherefore, though late, in requital  
He sends the Avenger.

Thus Zeus our master  
Guardian of guest and of host  
Sent against Paris the sons of Atreus  
For a woman of many men  
Many the dog-tired wrestlings  
Limbs and knees in the dust pressed—  
For both the Greeks and Trojans  
An overture of breaking spears.

Things are where they are, will finish  
In the manner fated and neither  
Fire beneath nor oil above can soothe  
The stubborn anger of the unburnt offering.  
As for us, our bodies are bankrupt,  
The expedition left us behind  
And we wait supporting on sticks  
Our strength—the strength of a child;  
For the marrow that leaps in a boy's body  
Is no better than that of the old  
For the War God is not in his body;  
While the man who is very old  
And his leaf withering away  
Goes on the three-foot way  
No better than a boy, and wanders  
A dream in the middle of the day.

But you, daughter of Tyndareus,  
Queen Clytemnestra,

What is the news, what is the truth, what have you learnt,  
On the strength of whose word have you thus  
Sent orders for sacrifice round?  
All the gods, the gods of the town,  
Of the worlds of Below and Above,

56. *guests in his kingdom*: since they live in the sky, his domain.

58. *Avenger*: a Fury. The Furies avenged those who could not avenge themselves. So, later in the trilogy, they come to demand retribution for the murder of Clytemnestra, who has left no avenger behind her.

60. *Guardian of guest and of host*: Zeus himself punished violations of the code of hospitality. In this case he punishes the abduction of Helen by Paris, who was a guest in the house of

Menelaus.

73 ff. *And we wait . . .*: The general sense of the passage is that only two classes of the male population are left in Argos, those who are too young to fight and those who, like the chorus, are too old. The emphasis on the age and weakness of the members of the chorus prepares the audience for their complete failure of nerve at the moment of Agamemnon's murder.

80. *three-foot*: two feet and a stick.

82. Enter Clytemnestra.

By the door, in the square, 90  
 Have their altars ablaze with your gifts,  
 From here, from there, all sides, all corners,  
 Sky-high leap the flame-jets fed  
 By gentle and undeceiving  
 Persuasion of sacred unguent, 95  
 Oil from the royal stores.  
 Of these things tell  
 That which you can, that which you may,  
 Be healer of this our trouble  
 Which at times torments with evil 100  
 Though at times by propitiations  
 A shining hope repels  
 The insatiable thought upon grief  
 Which is eating away our hearts.  
 Of the omen which powerfully speeded 105  
 That voyage of strong men, by God's grace even I  
 Can tell, my age can still  
 Be galvanized to breathe the strength of song,  
 To tell how the kings of all the youth of Greece  
 Two-throned but one in mind 110  
 Were launched with pike and punitive hand  
 Against the Trojan shore by angry birds.  
 Kings of the birds to our kings came,  
 One with a white rump, the other black,  
 Appearing near the palace on the spear-arm side 115  
 Where all could see them,  
 Tearing a pregnant hare with the unborn young  
 Foiled of their courses.  
 / Cry, cry upon Death; but may the good prevail !  
 But the diligent prophet of the army seeing the sons 120  
 Of Atreus twin in temper knew  
 That the hare-killing birds were the two  
 Generals, explained it thus—  
 "In time this expedition sacks the town  
 Of Troy before whose towers 125  
 By Fate's force the public  
 Wealth will be wasted.

104. Clytemnestra leaves the stage without giving them an answer.

105. *omen*: The chorus proceeds to describe the omen which accompanied the departure of the army for Troy ten years before. Two eagles seized and tore a pregnant hare; this was interpreted by the prophet Calchas as mean-

ing that the two kings would destroy the city of Troy, thus killing not only the living Trojans but the Trojan generations yet unborn.

113. *Kings of the birds*: eagles.

115. *spear-arm side*: the right.

120. *prophet*: Calchas.

Only let not some spite from the gods benight the bulky  
battalions,

The bridle of Troy, nor strike them untimely;

For the goddess feels pity, is angry 130

With the winged dogs of her father

Who killed the cowering hare with her unborn young;

Artemis hates the eagles' feast."

| Cry, cry upon Death; but may the good prevail

"But though you are so kind, goddess, 135

To the little cubs of lions

And to all the sucking young of roving beasts

In whom your heart delights,

Fulfil us the signs of these things,

The signs which are good but open to blame, 140

And I call on Apollo the Healer

That his sister raise not against the Greeks

Unremitting gales to baulk their ships,

Hurrying on another kind of sacrifice, with no feasting,

| Barbarous building of hates and disloyalties 145

Grown on the family. For anger grimly returns

Cunningly haunting the house, avenging the death of a child,  
never forgetting its due."

So cried the prophet—evil and good together,

Fate that the birds foretold to the king's house,

In tune with this 150

Cry, cry upon Death; but may the good prevail.

Zeus, whoever He is, if this

Be a name acceptable,

By this name I will call him.

There is no one comparable 155

When I reckon all of the case

Excepting Zeus, if ever I am to jettison

The barren care which clogs my heart.

130. *goddess*: Artemis, a virgin goddess, patron of hunting and the protectress of wild life. She is angry that the eagles have destroyed a pregnant animal. The prophet fears that she may turn her wrath against the kings whom the eagles represent.

135. *goddess*: Calchas addresses a prayer to Artemis.

143. *Unremitting gales*: He foresees the future. Artemis will send unfavorable winds to prevent the sailing of the Greek expedition from Aulis, the port of embarkation. She will demand the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenia as the price of the fleet's re-

lease.

144. *with no feasting*: At an ordinary sacrifice the celebrants gave the gods their due portion and then feasted on the animal's flesh. The word "sacrifice" comes to have the connotation of "feast." There will be no feast at this sacrifice, since the victim will be a human being. The ominous phrase reminds us of a feast of human flesh which has already taken place, Thyestes' feasting on his children.

147. *avenging the death of a child*: This prophecy is fulfilled in this play, by the murder of Agamemnon.

Not He who formerly was great  
 With brawling pride and mad for broils 160  
 Will even be said to have been.  
 And He who was next has met  
 His match and is seen no more,  
 But Zeus is the name to cry in your triumph-song  
 And win the prize for wisdom. 165

Who setting us on the road  
 Made this a valid law—  
 ("That men must learn by suffering."  
 Drop by drop in sleep upon the heart  
 Falls the laborious memory of pain, 170  
 Against one's will comes wisdom;  
 The grace of the gods is forced on us  
 Throned inviolably.)

So at that time the elder  
 Chief of the Greek ships 175  
 Would not blame any prophet  
 Nor face the flail of fortune;  
 For unable to sail, the people  
 Of Greece were heavy with famine,  
 Waiting in Aulis where the tides 180  
 Flow back, opposite Chalcis.)

But the winds that blew from the Strymon,  
 Bringing delay, hunger, evil harbourage,  
 Crazing men, rotting ships and cables,  
 By drawing out the time 185  
 Were shredding into nothing the flower of Argos,  
 When the prophet screamed a new  
 Curc for that bitter tempest  
 And heavier still for the chiefs,  
 Pleading the anger of Artemis so that the sons of Atreus 190  
 Beat the ground with their sceptres and shed tears.

159. *He who formerly was great:* Uranus, father of Cronos, grandfather of Zeus, the first lord of heaven. This whole passage refers to a primitive legend which told how Uranus was violently supplanted by his son Cronos, who was in his turn overthrown by his son Zeus. This legend is made to bear new meaning by Aeschylus, for he suggests that it is not a meaningless series of acts of violence, but a progression to the rule of Zeus, who stands for order and justice. Thus the law of human life which Zeus proclaims and administers,

that wisdom comes through suffering, has its counterpart in the history of the establishment of the divine rule.

162. *He who was next:* Cronos.

174-175. *elder chief:* Agamemnon.

180-181. *Aulis . . . Chalcis:* the unruly water of the narrows between Aulis on the mainland and Chalcis on the island of Euboea.

182. *Strymon:* a river in Thrace; the winds blew from the north.

190. *anger of Artemis:* The prophet announces Artemis' demand for the sacrifice of Iphigenia.

Then the elder king found voice and answered:

"Heavy is my fate, not obeying,  
And heavy it is if I kill my child, the delight of my house,  
And with a virgin's blood upon the altar  
Make foul her father's hands.

195

Either alternative is evil.

How can I betray the fleet

And fail the allied army?

It is right they should passionately cry for the winds to be  
lulled

200

By the blood of a girl. So be it. May it be well."

But when he had put on the halter of Necessity  
Breathing in his heart a veering wind of evil  
Unsanctioned, unholy, from that moment forward  
He changed his counsel, would stop at nothing.  
For the heart of man is hardened by infatuation,  
A faulty adviser, the first link of sorrow.  
Whatever the cause, he brought himself to slay  
His daughter, an offering to promote the voyage  
To a war for a runaway wife.

205

210

Her prayers and her cries of father,  
Her life of a maiden,  
Counted for nothing with those militarists;  
But her father, having duly prayed, told the attendants  
To lift her, like a goat, above the altar  
With her robes falling about her,  
To lift her boldly, her spirit fainting,  
And hold back with a gag upon her lovely mouth  
By the dumb force of a bridle  
The cry which would curse the house.  
Then dropping on the ground her saffron dress,  
Glancing at each of her appointed  
Sacrificers a shaft of pity,  
Plain as in a picture she wished  
To speak to them by name, for often  
At her father's table where men feasted  
She had sung in celebration for her father  
With a pure voice, affectionately, virginally,  
The hymn for happiness at the third libation.  
The sequel to this I saw not and tell not  
But the crafts of Calchas gained their object.

215

220

225

230

229. at the third libation: At the banquet three libations (offerings of wine) were poured, the third and last

to Zeus the Savior. The last libation was accompanied by a hymn of praise.

To learn by suffering is the equation of Justice; the Future  
Is known when it comes, let it go till then.

To know in advance is to sorrow in advance:

The facts will appear with the shining of the dawn.

235

[Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.]

But may good, at the least, follow after  
As the queen here wishes, who stands  
Nearest the throne, the only

Defence of the land of Argos.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS. I have come, Clytemnestra, reverencing  
your authority.

240

For it is right to honour our master's wife  
When the man's own throne is empty.

But you, if you have heard good news for certain, or if  
You sacrifice on the strength of flattering hopes,

I would gladly hear. Though I cannot cavil at silence.

245

CLYTEMNESTRA. Bearing good news, as the proverb says, may Dawn  
Spring from her mother Night.

You will hear something now that was beyond your hopes.

The men of Argos have taken Priam's city.

LEAD. What! I cannot believe it. It escapes me.

250

CLYT. Troy in the hands of the Greeks. Do I speak plain?

LEAD. Joy creeps over me, calling out my tears.

CLYT. Yes. Your eyes proclaim your loyalty.

LEAD. But what are your grounds? Have you a proof of it?

255

CLYT. There is proof indeed—unless God has cheated us.

255

LEAD. Perhaps you believe the inveigling shapes of dreams?

CLYT. I would not be credited with a dozing brain!

LEAD. Or are you puffed up by Rumour, the wingless flyer?

CLYT. You mock my common sense as if I were a child.

LEAD. But at what time was the city given to sack?

260

CLYT. In this very night that gave birth to this day.

LEAD. What messenger could come so fast?

CLYT. Hephaestus, launching a fine flame from Ida,

263. *Hephaestus*: i.e., fire. Hephaestus was the god of fire and of the crafts dependent upon fire.

263 ff. *Ida*: the mountain range near Troy. The names which follow in this speech designate the places where beacon fires flashed the message of Troy's fall to Argos. The chain extends from Ida to Hermes' cliff on the island of Lemnos (off the coast of Asia Minor), to Mount Athos (which is situated on a rocky peninsula in north Greece), to Mount Macistus on the island of Euboea (off the coast of central Greece), to Messapion, a mountain of the mainland, to Cithaeron, a mountain near Thebes, across Lake Gorgopis to

Mount Aegipectus on the Isthmus of Corinth, across the sea (the Saronic Gulf) to Mount Arachnaeus in Argive territory. This fire is the one seen by the watchman at the beginning of the play. The speech has often been criticized as discursive, but it has great poetic importance. The image of the light which will dispel the darkness, first introduced by the watchman, is one of the dominant images of the trilogy, and is here developed by Clytemnestra with magnificent ambiguous effect. For the watchman the light means the safe return of Agamemnon and the restoration of order in the house; for Clytemnestra it means the return of Aga-

Beacon forwarding beacon, despatch-riders of fire,  
 Ida relayed to Hermes' cliff in Lemnos 265  
 And the great glow from the island was taken over third  
 By the height of Athos that belongs to Zeus,  
 And towering then to straddle over the sea  
 The might of the running torch joyfully tossed  
 The gold gleam forward like another sun, 270  
 Herald of light to the heights of Mount Macistus,  
 And he without delay, nor carelessly by sleep  
 Encumbered, did not shirk his intermediary role,  
 His farflung ray reached the Euripus' tides  
 And told Messapion's watchers, who in turn 275  
 Sent on the message further  
 Setting a stack of dried-up heather on fire.  
 And the strapping flame, not yet enfeebled, leapt  
 Over the plain of Asopus like a blazing moon  
 And woke on the crags of Cithaeron 280  
 Another relay in the chain of fire.  
 The light that was sent from far was not declined  
 By the look-out men, who raised a fiercer yet,  
 A light which jumped the water of Gorgopis  
 And to Mount Aegiplanctus duly come 285  
 Urged the reveille of the punctual fire.  
 So then they kindle it squanderingly and launch  
 A beard of flame big enough to pass  
 The headland that looks down upon the Saronic gulf,  
 Blazing and bounding till it reached at length 290  
 The Arachnaean steep, our neighbouring heights;  
 And leaps in the latter end on the roof of the sons of Atreus  
 Issue and image of the fire on Ida.  
 Such was the assignment of my torch-racers,  
 The task of each fulfilled by his successor, 295  
 And victor is he who ran both first and last.  
 Such is the proof I offer you, the sign  
 My husband sent me out of Troy.

LEAD. To the gods, queen, I shall give thanks presently.

memnon to his death at her hands. Each swift jump of the racing light is one step nearer home and death for Agamemnon. The light the watchman longs for brings only greater darkness, but eventually it brings darkness for Clytemnestra too. The final emergence of the true light comes in the glare of the torchlight procession which ends the last play of the trilogy, a procession which symbolizes perfect reconciliation on both the human and the divine levels, and the working out of the will of Zeus in the substitution of

justice for vengeance. The conception of the beacons as a chain of descendants (compare, "Issue and image of the fire on Ida," l. 293), is also important; the fire at Argos which announces Agamemnon's imminent death is a direct descendant of the fire on Ida which announces the sack of Troy and Agamemnon's sacrilegious conduct there. The metaphor thus reminds us of the sequence of crimes from generation to generation which is the history of the house of Pelops.

296. *he who ran both first and last:*

But I would like to hear this story further, 300  
To wonder at it in detail from your lips.

CLYT. The Greeks hold Troy upon this day.

The cries in the town I fancy do not mingle.  
Pour oil and vinegar into the same jar,  
You would say they stand apart unlovingly; 305

Of those who are captured and those who have conquered

Distinct are the sounds of their diverse fortunes,

For *these* having flung themselves about the bodies

Of husbands and brothers, or sons upon the bodies

Of aged fathers from a throat no longer 310

Free, lament the fate of their most loved.

But *those* a night's marauding after battle

Sets hungry to what breakfast the town offers

Not billeted duly in any barracks order

But as each man has drawn his lot of luck. 315

So in the captive homes of Troy already

They take their lodging, free of the frosts

And dews of the open. Like happy men

They will sleep all night without sentry.

But if they respect duly the city's gods, 320

Those of the captured land and the sanctuaries of the gods,

They need not, having conquered, fear reconquest.

But let no lust fall first upon the troops

To plunder what is not right, subdued by gain,

For they must still, in order to come home safe, 325

Get round the second lap of the doubled course.

So if they return without offence to the gods

The grievance of the slain may learn at last

A friendly talk—unless some fresh wrong falls.

Such are the thoughts you hear from me, a woman. 330

But may the good prevail for all to see.

We have much good. I only ask to enjoy it.

LEAD. Woman, you speak with sense like a prudent man.

I, who have heard your valid proofs, prepare

To give the glory to God. 335

Fair recompense is brought us for our troubles.

[CLYTEMNESTRA goes back into the palace.]

CHOR. O Zeus our king and Night our friend

Donor of glories,

Night who cast on the towers of Troy

The chain of beacons is compared to a relay race in which the runners carry torches; the last runner (who runs the final lap) comes in first to win.

323. *But let no lust fall*: The audience was familiar with the traditional

account, according to which Agamemnon and his army failed signally to respect the gods and temples of Troy.

337. *Night*: Troy fell to a night attack.



A close-clinging net so that neither the grown      340  
Nor any of the children can pass  
The enslaving and huge  
Trap of all-taking destruction.

Great Zeus, guardian of host and guest,  
I honour who has done his work and taken      345  
A leisured aim at Paris so that neither  
Too short nor yet over the stars  
He might shoot to no purpose.

From Zeus is the blow they can tell of,  
This at least can be established,      350  
They have fared according to his ruling. For some  
Deny that the gods deign to consider those among men  
Who trample on the grace of inviolate things;

It is the impious man says this,  
For Ruin is revealed the child      355  
Of not to be attempted actions  
When men are puffed up unduly  
And their houses are stuffed with riches.

Measure is the best. Let danger be distant,  
This should suffice a man      360  
With a proper part of wisdom.

For a man has no protection  
Against the drunkenness of riches  
Once he has spurned from his sight  
The high altar of Justice.      365

Sombre Persuasion compels him,  
Intolerable child of calculating Doom;  
All cure is vain, there is no glozing it over  
But the mischief shines forth with a deadly light  
And like bad coinage      370

By rubbings and frictions  
He stands discoloured and black  
Under the test—like a boy  
Who chases a winged bird.  
He has branded his city for ever.      375

His prayers are heard by no god.  
Who makes such things his practice  
The gods destroy him.

This way came Paris

353. *Who trample . . . things*: The language throughout this passage is significantly general. The chorus refers to Paris, but everything it says is equally applicable to Agamemnon, who

sacrificed his daughter for his ambitions.

359. *Measure*: the mean, moderation.

373–374. *like a boy . . . bird*: a proverbial expression describing a person of insane ambitions.

To the house of the sons of Atreus 380  
 And outraged the table of friendship  
 Stealing the wife of his host.

Leaving to her countrymen clanging of  
 Shields and spears and  
 Launching of warships 385  
 And bringing instead of a dowry destruction to Troy  
 Lightly she was gone through the gates daring  
 Things undared. Many the groans  
 Of the palace spokesmen on this theme—  
 "O the house, the house, and its princes, 390  
 O the bed and the imprint of her limbs;  
 One can see him crouching in silence  
 Dishonoured and unreviling."  
 Through desire for her who is overseas, a ghost  
 Will seem to rule the household. 395  
 And now her husband hates  
 The grace of shapely statues;  
 In the emptiness of their eyes  
 All their appeal is departed.

But appearing in dreams persuasive 400  
 Images come bringing a joy that is vain,  
 Vain for when in fancy he looks to touch her—  
 Slipping through his hands the vision  
 Rapidly is gone  
 Following on wings the walks of sleep. 405  
 Such are his griefs in his house on his hearth,  
 Such as these and worse than these,  
 But everywhere through the land of Greece which men have left  
 Are mourning women with enduring hearts  
 To be seen in all houses; many 410  
 Are the thoughts which stab their hearts;  
 For those they sent to war  
 They know, but in place of men  
 That which comes home to them  
 Is merely an urn and ashes. 415

But the money-changer War, changer of bodies,  
 Holding his balance in the battle  
 Home from Troy refined by fire  
 Sends back to friends the dust  
 That is heavy with tears, stowing 420  
 A man's worth of ashes

In an easily handled jar.  
And they wail speaking well of the men how that one  
Was expert in battle, and one fell well in the carnage—  
But for another man's wife. 425

Muffled and muttered words;  
And resentful grief creeps up against the sons  
Of Atreus and their cause.  
But others there by the wall  
Entombed in Trojan ground 430  
Lie, handsome of limb,  
Holding and hidden in enemy soil.

Heavy is the murmur of an angry people  
Performing the purpose of a public curse;  
There is something cowed in the night 435  
That I anxiously wait to hear.

For the gods are not blind to the  
Murderers of many and the black  
Furies in time

When a man prospers in sin 440

By erosion of life reduce him to darkness,  
Who, once among the lost, can no more

Be helped. Over-great glory  
Is a sore burden. The high peak  
Is blasted by the eyes of Zeus. 445

I prefer an unenvied fortune,  
Not to be a sacker of cities  
Nor to find myself living at another's  
Ruling, myself a captive.

AN OLD MAN. From the good news' beacon a swift  
Rumour is gone through the town. 450

Who knows if it be true  
Or some deceit of the gods?

ANOTHER OLD MAN. Who is so childish or broken in wit  
To kindle his heart at a new-fangled message of flame 455  
And then be downcast

At a change of report?

ANOTHER OLD MAN. It fits the temper of a woman.

To give her assent to a story before it is proved.

ANOTHER OLD MAN. The over-credulous passion of women  
expands 460

In swift conflagration but swiftly declining is gone  
The news that a woman announced.

LEAD. Soon we shall know about the illuminant torches,  
The beacons and the fiery relays,

Whether they were true or whether like dreams 465  
That pleasant light came here and hoaxed our wits.

Look: I see, coming from the beach, a herald  
Shadowed with olive shoots; the dust upon him,  
Mud's thirsty sister and colleague, is my witness  
That he will not give dumb news nor news by lighting 470  
A flame of fire with the smoke of mountain timber;  
In words he will either corroborate our joy—  
But the opposite version I reject with horror.

To the good appeared so far may good be added.

ANOTHER SPEAKER. Whoever makes other prayers for this our  
city, 475

May he reap himself the fruits of his wicked heart.

[Enter the HERALD, who kisses the ground before speaking.]

HERALD. Earth of my fathers, O the earth of Argos,  
In the light of the tenth year I reach you thus  
After many shattered hopes achieving one,  
For never did I dare to think that here in Argive land 480  
I should win a grave in the dearest soil of home;  
But now hail, land, and hail, light of the sun.

And Zeus high above the country and the Pythian king—  
May he no longer shoot his arrows at us  
(Implacable long enough beside Scamander) 485

But now be saviour to us and be healer,  
King Apollo. And all the Assembly's gods  
I call upon, and him my patron, Hermes,  
The dear herald whom all heralds adore,  
And the Heroes who sped our voyage, again with favour 490  
Take back the army that has escaped the spear.

O cherished dwelling, palace of royalty,  
O august thrones and gods facing the sun,  
If ever before, now with your bright eyes  
Gladly receive your king after much time, 495  
Who comes bringing light to you in the night time,  
And to all these as well—King Agamemnon.

Give him a good welcome as he deserves,  
Who with the axe of judgment-awarding God  
Has smashed Troy and levelled the Trojan land; 500  
The altars are destroyed, the seats of the gods,  
And the seed of all the land is perished from it.  
Having cast this halter round the neck of Troy  
The King, the elder son of Atreus, a blessed man,

468. *Shadowed with olive shoots*: scenes of the *Iliad*, Book I.  
wearing a wreath of olive.

483. *Pythian king*: Apollo.

484. *arrows*: Compare the opening

488. *Hermes*: As the messenger of Zeus, he was the patron deity of heralds.

Comes, the most worthy to have honour of all 505  
 Men that are now. Paris nor his guilty city  
 Can boast that the crime was greater than the atonement.  
 Convicted in a suit for rape and robbery  
 He has lost his stolen goods and with consummate ruin  
 Mowed down the whole country and his father's house. 510  
 The sons of Priam have paid their account with interest.

LEAD. Hail and be glad, herald of the Greek army.

HER. Yes. Glad indeed! So glad that at the gods' demand  
 I should no longer hesitate to die.

LEAD. Were you so harrowed by desire for home? 515

HER. Yes. The tears come to my eyes for joy.

LEAD. Sweet then is the fever which afflicts you.

HER. What do you mean? Let me learn your drift.

LEAD. Longing for those whose love came back in echo.

HER. Meaning the land was homesick for the army? 520

LEAD. Yes. I would often groan from a darkened heart.

HER. This sullen hatred—how did it fasten on you?

LEAD. I cannot say. Silence is my stock prescription.

HER. What? In your masters' absence were there some you feared?

LEAD. Yes. In your phrase, death would now be a gratification. 525

HER. Yes, for success is ours. These things have taken time.

Some of them we could say have fallen well,

While some we blame. Yet who except the gods

Is free from pain the whole duration of life?

If I were to tell of our labours, our hard lodging; 530

The sleeping on crowded decks, the scanty blankets,

Tossing and groaning, rations that never reached us—

And the land too gave matter for more disgust;

For our beds lay under the enemy's walls.

Continuous drizzle from the sky, dews from the marshes, 535

Rotting our clothes, filling our hair with lice.

And if one were to tell of the bird-destroying winter

Intolerable from the snows of Ida

Or of the heat when the sea slackens at noon

Waveless and dozing in a depressed calm— 540

But why make these complaints? The weariness is over;

Over indeed for some who never again

Need even trouble to rise.

Why make a computation of the lost?

Why need the living sorrow for the spites of fortune? 545

I wish to say a long goodbye to disasters.

For us, the remnant of the troops of Argos,

523. *Silence:* Throughout this dialogue the chorus has been nerving itself to warn the herald that there is danger for Agamemnon at home; at this point its nerve fails, and it abandons the attempt.

The advantage remains, the pain can not outweigh it;  
 So we can make our boast to this sun's light,  
 Flying on words above the land and sea: 550  
 "Having taken Troy the Argive expedition  
 Has nailed up throughout Greece in every temple  
 These spoils, these ancient trophies."

Those who hear such things must praise the city  
 And the generals. And the grace of God be honoured 555  
 Which brought these things about. You have the whole story.

LEAD. I confess myself convinced by your report.

Old men are always young enough to learn.

[Enter CLYTEMNESTRA from the palace.]

This news belongs by right first to the house  
 And Clytemnestra—though I am enriched also. 560

CLYT. Long before this I shouted at joy's command  
 At the coming of the first night-messenger of fire  
 Announcing the taking and capsizing of Troy.  
 And people reproached me saying, "Do mere beacons  
 Persuade you to think that Troy is already down? 565  
 Indeed a woman's heart is easily exalted."

Such comments made me seem to be wandering but yet  
 I began my sacrifices and in the women's fashion  
 Throughout the town they raised triumphant cries  
 And in the gods' enclosures 570  
 Lulling the fragrant, incense-cating flame.

And now what need is there for you to tell me more?  
 From the King himself I shall learn the whole story.  
 But how the best to welcome my honoured lord  
 I shall take pains when he comes back—For what 575  
 Is a kinder light for a woman to see than this,

To open the gates to her man come back from war  
 When God has saved him? Tell this to my husband,  
 To come with all speed, the city's darling;  
 May he returning find a wife as loyal 580

As when he left her, watchdog of the house,  
 Good to *him* but fierce to the ill-intentioned,  
 And in all other things as ever, having destroyed  
 No seal or pledge at all in the length of time.  
 I know no pleasure with another man, no scandal, 585  
 More than I know how to dye metal red.

Such is my boast, bearing a load of truth,  
 A boast that need not disgrace a noble wife. [Exit.]

LEAD. Thus has she spoken; if you take her meaning,  
 Only a specious tale to shrewd interpreters. 590

569. *triumphant cries*: the women's victory cry mentioned by the watchman.

But do you, herald, tell me; I ask after Menelaus  
Whether he will, returning safe preserved,  
Come back with you, our land's loved master.

HER. I am not able to speak the lovely falsehood  
To profit you, my friends, for any stretch of time. 595

LEAD. But if only the true tidings could be also good!  
It is hard to hide a division of good and true.

HER. The prince is vanished out of the Greek fleet,  
Himself and ship. I speak no lie.

LEAD. Did he put forth first in the sight of all from Troy,  
Or a storm that troubled all sweep him apart? 600

HER. You have hit the target like a master archer,  
Told succinctly a long tale of sorrow.

LEAD. Did the rumours current among the remaining ships  
Represent him as alive or dead? 605

HER. No one knows so as to tell for sure  
Except the sun who nurses the breeds of earth.

LEAD. Tell me how the storm came on the host of ships  
Through the divine anger, and how it ended.

HER. Day of good news should not be fouled by tongue  
That tells ill news. To each god his season. 610

When, despair in his face, a messenger brings to a town  
The hated news of a fallen army—

One general wound to the city and many men  
Outcast, outcursed, from many homes 615

By the double whip which War is fond of,  
Doom with a bloody spear in either hand,

One carrying such a pack of grief could well  
Recite this hymn of the Furies at your asking.

But when our cause is saved and a messenger of good  
Comes to a city glad with festivity, 620

How am I to mix good news with bad, recounting  
The storm that meant God's anger on the Greeks?

For they swore together, those inveterate enemies,  
Fire and sea, and proved their alliance, destroying 625

The unhappy troops of Argos.

In night arose ill-waved evil,

Ships on each other the blasts from Thrace

Crashed colliding, which butting with horns in the violence

Of big wind and rattle of rain were gone 630

591. *Menelaus*: The relevance of this question and the following speeches lies in the fact that Menelaus' absence makes Agamemnon's murder easier (his presence might have made it impossible), and in the fact that Menelaus is bringing Helen home; the

choral ode which follows shows how much the chorus is obsessed with Helen's guilt—so much that it fails to recognize the true responsibility for the war and the imminence of disaster.  
625. *Fire*: lightning.

To nothing, whirled all ways by a wicked shepherd.  
 But when there came up the shining light of the sun  
 We saw the Aegean sea flowering with corpses  
 Of Greek men and their ships' wreckage.

But for us, our ship was not damaged, 635  
 Whether someone snatched it away or begged it off,  
 Some god, not a man, handling the tiller;

And Saving Fortune was willing to sit upon our ship  
 So that neither at anchor we took the tilt of waves  
 Nor ran to splinters on the crag-bound coast. 640

But then having thus escaped death on the sea,  
 In the white day, not trusting our fortune,  
 We pastured this new trouble upon our thoughts,  
 The fleet being battered, the sailors weary, 645  
 And now if any of *them* still draw breath,

They are thinking no doubt of us as being lost  
 And we are thinking of them as being lost.  
 May the best happen. As for Menelaus  
 The first guess and most likely is a disaster.

But still—if any ray of sun detects him 650  
 Alive, with living eyes, by the plan of Zeus  
 Not yet resolved to annul the race completely,

There is some hope then that he will return home.  
 So much you have heard. Know that it is the truth. [Exit.]

CHOR. Who was it named her thus 655

In all ways appositely  
 Unless it was Someone whom we do not see,  
 Fore-knowing fate

And plying an accurate tongue?  
 Helen, bride of spears and conflict's 660

Focus, who as was befitting  
 Proved a hell to ships and men,  
 Hell to her country, sailing

Away from delicately-sumptuous curtains,  
 Away on the wind of a giant Zephyr, 665  
 And shielded hunters mustered many

On the vanished track of the oars,  
 Oars beached on the leafy  
 Banks of a Trojan river

For the sake of a bloody war. 670

But on Troy was thrust a marring marriage  
 By the Wrath that working to an end exacts  
 In time a price from guests

656. *appositely*: Helen's name contains a Greek root (*hele-*) which means "to destroy."



Who dishonoured their host  
 And dishonoured Zeus of the Hearth,      675  
 From those noisy celebrants  
 Of the wedding hymn which fell  
 To the brothers of Paris  
 To sing upon that day.  
 But learning this, unlearning that,      680  
 Priam's ancestral city now  
 Continually mourns, reviling  
 Paris the fatal bridegroom.  
 The city has had much sorrow,  
 Much desolation in life,      685  
 From the pitiful loss of her people.

So in his house a man might rear  
 A lion's cub caught from the dam  
 In need of suckling,  
 In the prelude of its life      690  
 Mild, gentle with children,  
 For old men a playmate,  
 Often held in the arms  
 Like a new-born child,  
 Wheedling the hand,      695  
 Fawning at belly's bidding.

But matured by time he showed  
 The temper of his stock and payed  
 Thanks for his fostering  
 With disaster of slaughter of sheep      700  
 Making an unbidden banquet  
 And now the house is a shambles,  
 Irremediable grief to its people,  
 Calamitous carnage;  
 For the pet they had fostered was sent      705  
 By God as a priest of Ruin.

So I would say there came  
 To the city of Troy  
 A notion of windless calm,  
 Delicate adornment of riches,      710  
 Soft shooting of the eyes and flower  
 Of desire that stings the fancy.  
 But swerving aside she achieved  
 A bitter end to her marriage,  
 Ill guest and ill companion,      715

675. *Zeus of the Hearth*: Zeus in his capacity as protector of host and guest.

Hurled upon Priam's sons, convoyed  
By Zeus, patron of guest and host,  
Dark angel dowered with tears.

Long current among men an old saying  
Runs that a man's prosperity 720  
When grown to greatness  
Comes to birth, does not die childless—  
His good luck breeds for his house  
Distress that shall not be appeased.  
I only, apart from the others, 725  
Hold that the unrighteous action  
Breeds true to its kind,  
Leaves its own children behind it.  
But the lot of a righteous house  
Is a fair offspring always. 730

Ancient self-glory is accustomed  
To bear to light in the evil sort of men  
A new self-glory and madness,  
Which sometime or sometime finds  
The appointed hour for its birth, 735  
And born therewith is the Spirit, intractable, unholy, irresistible,  
The reckless lust that brings black Doom upon the house,  
A child that is like its parents.

But Honest Dealing is clear  
Shining in smoky homes, 740  
Honours the god-fearing life.  
Mansions gilded by filth of hands she leaves,  
Turns her eyes elsewhere, visits the innocent house,  
Not respecting the power  
Of wealth mis-stamped with approval, 745  
But guides all to the goal.

[Enter AGAMEMNON and CASSANDRA on chariots.]

CHOR. Come then my King, stormer of Troy,  
Offspring of Atreus,  
How shall I hail you, how give you honour  
Neither overshooting nor falling short 750  
Of the measure of homage?  
There are many who honour appearance too much

719-724. *Long current . . . appeased*: These lines state the traditional Greek view that immoderate good fortune (or excellence of any kind beyond the average) is itself the cause of disaster. In the lines which follow, the chorus rejects this view and states that only an

act of evil produces evil consequences. It later admits by implication (ll. 739 ff.) that those who are less prosperous are less likely to commit such an act.

740. *smoky homes*: i.e., poor homes.

752. *There are many . . .*: The chorus is trying to warn Agamemnon,

Passing the bounds that are right.  
 To condole with the unfortunate man  
 Each one is ready but the bite of the grief 755  
 Never goes through to the heart.

And they join in rejoicing, affecting to share it,  
 Forcing their face to a smile.  
 But he who is shrewd to shepherd his sheep  
 Will fail not to notice the eyes of a man 760  
 Which seem to be loyal but lie,  
 Fawning with watery friendship.

Even you, in my thought, when you marshalled the troops  
 For Helen's sake, I will not hide it,  
 Made a harsh and ugly picture, 765  
 Holding badly the tiller of reason,  
 Paying with the death of men

Ransom for a willing whore.  
 But now, not unfriendly, not superficially,  
 I offer my service, well-doers' welcome. 770  
 In time you will learn by inquiry  
 Who has done rightly, who transgressed

In the work of watching the city.

AGAMEMNON. First to Argos and the country's gods  
 My fitting salutations, who have aided me 775  
 To return and in the justice which I exacted  
 From Priam's city. Hearing the unspoken case,  
 The gods unanimously had cast their vote  
 Into the bloody urn for the massacre of Troy;  
 But to the opposite urn 780

Hope came, dangled her hand, but did no more.  
 Smoke marks even now the city's capture.  
 Whirlwinds of doom are alive, the dying ashes  
 Spread on the air the fat savour of wealth.  
 For these things we must pay some memorable return 785  
 To Heaven, having exacted enormous vengeance  
 For wife-rape; for a woman

The Argive monster ground a city to powder,  
 Sprung from a wooden horse, shield-wielding folk,  
 Launching a leap at the setting of the Pleiads, 790  
 Jumping the ramparts, a ravening lion,  
 Lapped its fill of the kingly blood.  
 To the gods I have drawn out this overture

and goes much further than it did in its dialogue with the herald.

779. *bloody urn*: The Greeks voted with pebbles, which were put into different urns and then counted.

789. *wooden horse*: The stratagem with which the Greeks captured the city.

790. *at the setting of the Pleiads*: late in the fall.

But as for your concerns, I bear them in my mind  
 And say the same, you have me in agreement. 795  
 To few of men does it belong by nature  
 To congratulate their friends unenviously,  
 For a sullen poison fastens on the heart,  
 Doubling the pain of a man with this disease;  
 He feels the weight of his own griefs and when 800  
 He sees another's prosperity he groans.  
 I speak with knowledge, being well acquainted  
 With the mirror of comradeship—ghost of a shadow  
 Were those who seemed to be so loyal to me.  
 Only Odysseus, who sailed against his will, 805  
 Proved, when yoked with me, a ready tracchorse;  
 I speak of him not knowing if he is alive.  
 But for what concerns the city and the gods  
 Appointing public debates in full assembly  
 We shall consult. That which is well already 810  
 We shall take steps to ensure it remain well.  
 But where there is need of medical remedies,  
 By applying benevolent cautery or surgery  
 We shall try to deflect the dangers of disease.  
 But now, entering the halls where stands my hearth, 815  
 First I shall make salutation to the gods  
 Who sent me a far journey and have brought me back.  
 And may my victory not leave my side.

*[Enter CLYTEMNESTRA, followed by women slaves carrying purple tapestries.]*

CLYT. Men of the city, you the aged of Argos,  
 I shall feel no shame to describe to you my love 820  
 Towards my husband. Shyness in all of us  
 Wears thin with time. Here are the facts first hand.  
 I will tell you of my own unbearable life  
 I led so long as this man was at Troy.  
 For first that the woman separate from her man 825  
 Should sit alone at home is extreme cruelty,  
 Hearing so many malignant rumours—First  
 Comes one, and another comes after, bad news to worse,  
 Clamour of grief to the house. If Agamemnon  
 Had had so many wounds as those reported 830  
 Which poured home through the pipes of hearsay, then—

805. *Odysseus*: Feigning madness in order to escape going to Troy, he was tricked into demonstrating his sanity. The remark shows that the truth is far from Agamemnon's mind; he has no thought that his danger comes from a woman.

820–821. *love towards my husband*: The Greek is ambiguous, and may mean also "love for men."

821. *Shyness*: The word also means "modesty," "virtue." Almost every statement in this speech has a double meaning.

Then he would be gashed fuller than a net has holes!  
 And if only he had died . . . as often as rumour told us,  
 He would be like the giant in the legend,  
 Three-bodied. Dying once for every body, 835  
 He should have by now three blankets of earth above him—  
 All that above him; I care not how deep the mattress under!  
 Such are the malignant rumours thanks to which  
 They have often seized me against my will and undone  
 The loop of a rope from my neck. 840  
 And this is why our son is not standing here,  
 The guarantee of your pledges and mine,  
 As he should be, Orestes. Do not wonder;  
 He is being brought up by a friendly ally and host,  
 Strophius the Phocian, who warned me in advance 845  
 Of dubious troubles, both your risks at Troy  
 And the anarchy of shouting mobs that might  
 Overturn policy, for it is born in men  
 To kick the man who is down.  
 This is not a disingenuous excuse. 850  
 For me the outrushing wells of weeping are dried up,  
 There is no drop left in them.  
 My eyes are sore from sitting late at nights  
 Weeping for you and for the baffled beacons,  
 Never lit up. And, when I slept, in dreams 855  
 I have been waked by the thin whizz of a buzzing  
 Gnat, seeing more horrors fasten on you  
 Than could take place in the mere time of my dream.  
 Having endured all this, now, with unsorrowed heart  
 I would hail this man as the watchdog of the farm, 860  
 Forestay that saves the ship, pillar that props  
 The lofty roof, appearance of an only son  
 To a father or of land to sailors past their hope,  
 The loveliest day to see after the storm,  
 Gush of well-water for the thirsty traveller. 865  
 Such are the metaphors I think befit him,  
 But envy be absent. Many misfortunes already  
 We have endured. But now, dear head, come down  
 Out of that car, not placing upon the ground  
 Your foot, O King, the foot that trampled Troy. 870  
 Why are you waiting, slaves, to whom the task is assigned  
 To spread the pavement of his path with tapestries?

834. *giant*: Geryon, a fabulous giant with three heads and six arms.

845. *Phocian*: Phocis is in central Greece. Orestes grew up there in exile and later returned to avenge his father.

872. *tapestries*: To walk on these tapestries, wall hangings dyed with the expensive purple (crimson), would be an act of extravagant pride. Pride is the keynote of Agamemnon's character,

- At once, at once let his way be strewn with purple  
 That Justice lead him toward his unexpected home.  
 The rest a mind, not overcome by sleep 875  
 Will arrange rightly, with God's help, as destined.
- AGAM. Daughter of Leda, guardian of my house,  
 You have spoken in proportion to my absence.  
 You have drawn your speech out long. Duly to praise me,  
 That is a duty to be performed by others. 880  
 And further—do not by women's methods make me  
 Effeminate nor in barbarian fashion  
 Gape ground-grovelling acclamations at me  
 Nor strewing my path with cloths make it invidious.  
 It is the gods should be honoured in this way. 885  
 But being mortal to tread embroidered beauty  
 For me is no way without fear.  
 I tell you to honour me as a man, not god.  
 Footcloths are very well—Embroidered stuffs  
 Are stuff for gossip. And not to think unwisely 890  
 Is the greatest gift of God. Call happy only him  
 Who has ended his life in sweet prosperity.  
 I have spoken. This thing I could not do with confidence.
- CLYT. Tell me now, according to your judgment.
- AGAM. I tell you you shall not override my judgment. 895
- CLYT. Supposing you had feared something . . .  
 Could you have vowed to God to do this thing?
- AGAM. Yes. If an expert had prescribed that vow.
- CLYT. And how would Priam have acted in your place?
- AGAM. He would have trod the cloths, I think, for certain. 900
- CLYT. Then do not flinch before the blame of men.
- AGAM. The voice of the multitude is very strong.
- CLYT. But the man none envy is not enviable.
- AGAM. It is not a woman's part to love disputing.
- CLYT. But it is a conqueror's part to yield upon occasion. 905
- AGAM. You think such victory worth fighting for?
- CLYT. Give way. Consent to let me have the mastery.
- AGAM. Well, if such is your wish, let someone quickly loose  
 My vassal sandals, underlings of my feet,  
 And stepping on these sea-purplees may no god 910  
 Shoot me from far with the envy of his eye.

and it suits Clytemnestra's sense of fitness that he should go into his death in godlike state, treading a way "strewn with purple," the color of blood.

877. *Daughter of Leda*: Clytemnestra and Helen are both daughters of Leda.

882. *barbarian*: foreign, especially Asiatic. Aeschylus is thinking of the pomp and servility of the contemporary Persian court.

898. *expert*: a priest, or prophet, Calchas for instance.

910. *sea-purplees*: The dye was from shellfish.

Great shame it is to ruin my house and spoil  
The wealth of costly weavings with my feet.  
But of this matter enough. This stranger woman here  
Take in with kindness. The man who is a gentle master 915  
God looks on from far off complacently.

For no one of his will bears the slave's yoke.  
This woman, of many riches being the chosen  
Flower, gift of the soldiers, has come with me.  
But since I have been prevailed on by your words 920  
I will go to my palace home, treading on purples.

*[He dismounts from the chariot and begins to walk up the tapestried path. During the following speech he enters the palace.]*

CLYT. There is the sea and who shall drain it dry? It breeds  
Its wealth in silver of plenty of purple gushing  
And ever-renewed, the dycings of our garments.  
The house has its store of these by God's grace, King. 925  
This house is ignorant of poverty  
And I would have vowed a pavement of many garments  
Had the palace oracle enjoined that vow  
Thereby to contrive a ransom for his life.  
For while there is root, foliage comes to the house 930  
Spreading a tent of shade against the Dog Star.  
So now that you have reached your hearth and home  
You prove a miracle—advent of warmth in winter;  
And further this—even in the time of heat  
When God is fermenting wine from the bitter grape, 935  
Even then it is cool in the house if only  
Its master walk at home, a grown man, ripe.  
O Zeus the Ripener, ripen these my prayers;  
Your part it is to make the ripe fruit fall.

*[She enters the palace.]*

CHOR. Why, why at the doors 940  
Of my fore-seeing heart  
Does this terror keep beating its wings?  
And my song play the prophet  
Unbidden, unhired—  
Which I cannot spit out 945  
Like the enigmas of dreams  
Nor plausible confidence  
Sit on the throne of my mind?

914. *stranger woman*: Cassandra, daughter of Priam, Agamemnon's share of the human booty of the sack of Troy. She was loved by Apollo and by him given the gift of prophecy; but

when she refused her love to the god he added to his gift the proviso that her prophecies, though true, should never be believed until it was too late.

It is long time since  
 The cables let down from the stern 950  
 Were chafed by the sand when the seafaring army started for  
 Troy.

And I learn with my eyes  
 And witness myself their return;  
 But the hymn without lyre goes up,  
 The dirge of the Avenging Fiend, 955  
 In the depths of my self-taught heart  
 Which has lost its dear  
 Possession of the strength of hope.  
 But my guts and my heart  
 Are not idle which seethe with the waves 960  
 Of trouble nearing its hour.  
 But I pray that these thoughts  
 May fall out not as I think  
 And not be fulfilled in the end.

Truly when health grows much 965  
 It respects not limit; for disease,  
 Its neighbour in the next door room,  
 Presses upon it.  
 A man's life, crowding sail,  
 Strikes on the blind reef: 970  
 But if caution in advance  
 Jettison part of the cargo  
 With the derrick of due proportion,  
 The whole house does not sink,  
 Though crammed with a weight of woe 975  
 The hull does not go under.  
 The abundant bounty of God  
 And his gifts from the year's furrows  
 Drive the famine back.

But when upon the ground there has fallen once 980  
 The black blood of a man's death,  
 Who shall summon it back by incantations?  
 Even Asclepius who had the art  
 To fetch the dead to life, even to him  
 Zeus put a provident end. 985  
 But, if of the heaven-sent fates

971-979. *But if caution . . . back:* These lines refer to a traditional Greek belief that the fortunate man could avert the envy of heaven by deliberately getting rid of some precious possession.

983. *Asclepius:* the great physician, who was so skillful that he finally succeeded in restoring a dead man to life. Zeus struck him with a thunderbolt for going too far.



One did not check the other,  
 Cancel the other's advantage,  
 My heart would outrun my tongue  
 In pouring out these fears.  
 But now it mutters in the dark,  
 Embittered, no way of hoping  
 To unravel a scheme in time  
 From a burning mind.

990

[CLYTEMNESTRA appears in the door of the palace.]

CLYT. Go in too, you; I speak to you, Cassandra,  
 Since God in his clemency has put you in this house  
 To share our holy water, standing with many slaves  
 Beside the altar that protects the house,  
 Step down from the car there, do not be overproud.  
 Heracles himself they say was once  
 Sold, and endured to eat the bread of slavery.  
 But should such a chance inexorably fall,  
 There is much advantage in masters who have long been rich.  
 Those who have reaped a crop they never expected  
 Are in all things hard on their slaves and overstep the line.  
 From us you will have the treatment of tradition.

995

1000

LEAD. You, it is you she has addressed, and clearly.  
 Caught as you are in these predestined toils  
 Obey her if you can. But should you disobey . . .  
 CLYT. If she has more than the gibberish of the swallow,  
 An unintelligible barbaric speech,  
 I hope to read her mind, persuade her reason.  
 LEAD. As things now stand for you, she says the best.  
 Obey her; leave that car and follow her.

1010

CLYT. I have no leisure to waste out here, outside the door.  
 Before the hearth in the middle of my house:  
 The victims stand already, wait the knife.  
 You, if you will obey me, waste no time.  
 But if you cannot understand my language—  
 [To CHORUS LEADER]

1015

You make it plain to her with the brute and voiceless hand.  
 LEAD. The stranger seems to need a clear interpreter.  
 She bears herself like a wild beast newly captured.  
 CLYT. The fact is she is mad, she listens to evil thoughts,  
 Who has come here leaving a city newly captured  
 Without experience how to bear the bridle

1020

1025

997. *holy water*: used in the sacrifice in honor of Agamemnon's return which is about to take place inside the house.  
 1000. *Heracles*: The Greek hero, famous for his twelve labors which rid the earth of monsters; was at one

time forced to be slave to Omphale, an Eastern queen.  
 1010. *gibberish of the swallow*: The comparison of foreign speech to the twittering of the swallow was a Greek commonplace.

So as not to waste her strength in foam and blood.

I will not spend more words to be ignored.

[*She re-enters the palace.*]

CHOR. But I, for I pity her, will not be angry.

Obeys, unhappy woman. Leave this car.

Yield to your fate. Put on the untried yoke.

1030

CASSANDRA. Apollo! Apollo!

CHOR. Why do you cry like this upon Apollo?

He is not the kind of god that calls for dirges.

CASS. Apollo! Apollo!

CHOR. Once more her funereal cries invoke the god

1035

Who has no place at the scene of lamentation.

CASS. Apollo! Apollo!

God of the Ways! My destroyer!

Destroyed again—and this time utterly!

CHOR. She seems about to predict her own misfortunes.

1040

The gift of the god endures, even in a slave's mind.

CASS. Apollo! Apollo!

God of the Ways! My destroyer!

Where? To what house, Where, where have you brought me?

CHOR. To the house of the sons of Atreus. If you do not know

it,

1045

I will tell you so. You will not find it false.

CASS. No, no, but to a god-hated, but to an accomplice

In much kin-killing, murdering nooses,

Man-shambles, a floor asperged with blood.

CHOR. The stranger seems like a hound with a keen scent,

1050

Is picking up a trail that leads to murder.

CASS. Clues! I have clues! Look! They are these.

These wailing, these children, butchery of children;

Roasted flesh, a father sitting to dinner.

CHOR. Of your prophetic fame we have heard before

1055

But in this matter prophets are not required.

CASS. What is she doing? What is she planning?

What is this new great sorrow?

Great crime . . . within here . . . planning

Unendurable to his folk, impossible

1060

Ever to be cured. For help

Stands far distant.

1038. *God of the Ways*: A statue of Apollo was often placed outside the house overlooking the street. (Perhaps there was one on stage in this scene.) *destroyer*: The Greek word is *apollon*, a pun on the god's name.

1044. *brought*: another pun on the god's name; the word translated "brought" echoes, in the Greek, the

word translated "God of the ways."

1049. *asperged with blood*: She sees Agamemnon murdered in his bath.

1054. *a father sitting to dinner*: Thyestes at his feast.

1057. *she*: Clytemnestra.

1061-1062. *help stands far distant*: a reference to Menelaus (distant in space) and Orestes (distant in time).

- CHOR. This reference I cannot catch. But the children  
I recognized; that refrain is hackneyed.
- CASS. Damned, damned, bringing this work to completion— 1065  
Your husband who shared your bed  
To bathe him, to cleanse him, and then—  
How shall I tell of the end?  
Soon, very soon, it will fall.  
The end comes hand over hand 1070  
Grasping in greed.
- CHOR. Not yet do I understand. After her former riddles  
Now I am baffled by these dim pronouncements.
- CASS. Ah God, the vision! God, God, the vision!  
A net, is it? Net of Hell! 1075  
But herself is the net; shared bed; shares murder.  
O let the pack ever-hungering after the family  
Howl for the unholy ritual, howl for the victim.
- CHOR. What black Spirit is this you call upon the house—  
To raise aloft her cries? Your speech does not lighten me. 1080  
Into my heart runs back the blood  
Yellow as when for men by the spear fallen  
The blood ebbs out with the rays of the setting life  
And death strides quickly.
- CASS. Quick! Be on your guard! The bull— 1085  
Keep him clear of the cow.  
Caught with a trick, the black horn's point,  
She strikes. He falls; lies in the water.  
Murder; a trick in a bath. I tell what I see.
- CHOR. I would not claim to be expert in oracles 1090  
But these, as I deduce, portend disaster.  
Do men ever get a good answer from oracles?  
No. It is only through disaster  
That their garrulous craft brings home  
The meaning of the prophet's panic. 1095
- CASS. And for me also, for me, chance ill-destined!  
My own now I lament, pour into the cup my own.  
Where is this you have brought me in my misery?  
Unless to die as well. What else is meant?
- CHOR. You are mad, mad, carried away by the god, 1100  
Raising the dirge, the tuneless  
Tune, for yourself. Like the tawny

1077. *pack ever-hungering*: the Furies.

1102-1103. *tawny unsatisfied singer*: the nightingale. Philomela was raped by Tereus, the husband of her sister Procne. The two sisters avenged them-

selves by killing Tereus' son Itys, and serving up his flesh to Tereus to eat. Philomela was changed into a nightingale, mourning for Itys (the name is an imitation of the sound of the nightingale's song).

Unsatisfied singer from her luckless heart  
 Lamenting "Itys, Itys," the nightingale  
 Lamenting a life luxuriant with grief.

1105

CASS. Oh the lot of the songful nightingale!

The gods enclosed her in a winged body,  
 Gave her a sweet and tearless passing.

But for me remains the two-edged cutting blade.

CHOR. From whence these rushing and God-inflicted

1110

Profitless pains?

Why shape with your sinister crying

The piercing hymn—fear-piercing?

How can you know the evil-worded landmarks

On the prophetic path?

1115

CASS. Oh the wedding, the wedding of Paris—death to his people!

O river Scamander, water drunk by my fathers!

When I was young, alas, upon your beaches

I was brought up and cared for.

But now it is the River of Wailing and the banks of Hell

1120

That shall hear my prophecy soon.

CHOR. What is this clear speech, too clear?

A child can understand it.

I am bitten with fangs that draw blood

By the misery of your cries,

1125

Cries harrowing the heart.

CASS. O trouble on trouble of a city lost, lost utterly!

My father's sacrifices before the towers,

Much killing of cattle and sheep,

No cure—availed not at all

1130

To prevent the coming of what came to Troy,

And I, my brain on fire, shall soon enter the trap.

CHOR. This speech accords with the former.

What god, malicious, over-heavy, persistently pressing,

Drives you to chant of these lamentable

1135

Griefs with death their burden?

But I cannot see the end.

[CASSANDRA now steps down from the car.]

CASS. The oracle now no longer from behind veils

Will be peeping forth like a newly-wedded bride;

But I can feel it like a fresh wind swoop

1140

And rush in the face of the dawn and, wave-like, wash

Against the sun a vastly greater grief

Than this one. I shall speak no more conundrums.

And bear me witness, pacing me, that I

Am trailing on the scent of ancient wrongs.

1145

For this house here a choir never deserts.

Chanting together ill. For they mean ill,  
 And to puff up their arrogance they have drunk  
 Men's blood, this band of revellers that haunts the house,  
 Hard to be rid of, fiends that attend the family. 1150  
 Established in its rooms they hymn their hymn  
 Of that original sin, abhor in turn  
 The adultery that proved a brother's ruin.  
 A miss? Or do my arrows hit the mark?  
 Or am I a quack prophet who knocks at doors, a babbler? 1155  
 Give me your oath, confess I have the facts,  
 The ancient history of this house's crimes.

LEAD. And how could an oath's assurance, however finely assured,  
 Turn out a remedy? I wonder, though, that you  
 Being brought up overseas, of another tongue, 1160  
 Should hit on the whole tale as if you had been standing by.

CASS. Apollo the prophet set me to prophesy.

LEAD. Was he, although a god, struck by desire?

CASS. Till now I was ashamed to tell the story.

LEAD. Yes. Good fortune keeps us all fastidious. 1165

CASS. He wrestled hard upon me, panting love.

LEAD. And did you come, as they do, to child-getting?

CASS. No. I agreed to him. And I cheated him.

LEAD. Were you already possessed by the mystic art?

CASS. Already I was telling the townsmen all their future  
 suffering. 1170

LEAD. Then how did you escape the doom of Apollo's anger?

CASS. I did not escape. No one ever believed me.

LEAD. Yet to us your words seem worthy of belief.

CASS. Oh misery, misery!

Again comes on me the terrible labour of true  
 Prophecy, dizzying prelude; distracts . . . 1175

Do you see these who sit before the house,

Children, like the shapes of dreams?

Children who seem to have been killed by their kinsfolk,  
 Filling their hands with meat, flesh of themselves, 1180

Guts and entrails, handfuls of lament—

Clear what they hold—the same their father tasted.

For this I declare someone is plotting vengeance—

A lion? Lion but coward, that lurks in bed,

Good watchdog truly against the lord's return— 1185

My lord, for I must bear the yoke of serfdom.

Leader of the ships, overturner of Troy,

He does not know what plots the accursed hound

1153. *adultery*: Thyestes seduced  
 the wife of Atreus. This was the be-  
 ginning of strife between the brothers.

1184. *Lion but coward*: Aegisthus.  
 1188. *hound*: Clytemnestra.

With the licking tongue and the pricked-up ear will plan  
In the manner of a lurking doom, in an evil hour.

1190

A daring criminal! Female murders male.

What monster could provide her with a title?

An amphisbaena or hag of the sea who dwells

In rocks to ruin sailors—

A raving mother of death who breathes against her folk

1195

War to the finish. Listen to her shout of triumph,

Who shirks no horrors, like men in a rout of battle.

And yet she poses as glad at their return.

If you distrust my words, what does it matter?

That which will come will come. You too will soon stand  
here

1200

And admit with pity that I spoke too truly.

LEAD. Thyestes' dinner of his children's meat

I understood and shuddered, and fear grips me

To hear the truth, not framed in parables.

But hearing the rest I am thrown out of my course.

1205

CASS. It is Agamemnon's death I tell you you shall witness.

LEAD. Stop! Provoke no evil. Quiet your mouth!

CASS. The god who gives me words is here no healer.

LEAD. Not if this shall be so. But may some chance avert it.

CASS. *You* are praying. But others are busy with murder.

1210

LEAD. What man is he promotes this terrible thing?

CASS. Indeed you have missed my drift by a wide margin!

LEAD. But I do not understand the assassin's method.

CASS. And yet too well I know the speech of Greece!

LEAD. So does Delphi but the replies are hard.

1215

CASS. Ah what a fire it is! It comes upon me.

Apollo, Wolf-Destroyer, pity, pity . . .

It is the two-foot lioness who beds

Beside a wolf, the noble lion away,

It is she will kill me. Brewing a poisoned cup

1220

She will mix my punishment too in the angry draught

And boasts, sharpening the dagger for her husband,

To pay back murder, for my bringing here.

Why then do I wear these mockeries of myself,

The wand and the prophet's garland round my neck?

1225

My hour is coming—but you shall perish first.

Destruction! Scattered thus you give me my revenge;

Go and enrich some other woman with ruin.

1193. *amphisbaena*: a fabulous serpent with a head at either end; the word means literally "going in both directions."

1208. *healer*: one of Apollo's titles.

1212. *missed my drift*: in speaking of a man instead of a woman.

1215. *Delphi*: The replies of the Delphic oracle were celebrated for their obscurity and ambiguity.

- See: Apollo himself is stripping me  
 Of my prophetic gear, who has looked on 1230  
 When in this dress I have been a laughing-stock  
 To friends and foes alike, and to no purpose;  
 They called me crazy, like a fortune-teller,  
 A poor starved beggar-woman—and I bore it.  
 And now the prophet undoing his propheticess 1235  
 Has brought me to this final darkness.  
 Instead of my father's altar the executioner's block  
 Waits me the victim, red with my hot blood.  
 But the gods will not ignore me as I die.  
 One will come after to avenge my death, 1240  
 A matricide, a murdered father's champion.  
 Exile and tramp and outlaw he will come back  
 To gable the family house of fatal crime;  
 His father's outstretched corpse shall lead him home.  
 Why need I then lament so pitifully? 1245  
 For now that I have seen the town of Troy  
 Treated as she was treated, while her captors  
 Come to their reckoning thus by the gods' verdict,  
 I will go in and have the courage to die.  
 Look, these gates are the gates of Death. I greet them. 1250  
 And I pray that I may meet a deft and mortal stroke  
 So that without a struggle I may close  
 My eyes and my blood ebb in easy death.
- LEAD. Oh woman very unhappy and very wise,  
 Your speech was long. But if in sober truth 1255  
 You know your fate, why like an ox that the gods  
 Drive, do you walk so bravely to the altar?
- CASS. There is no escape, strangers. No; not by postponement.  
 LEAD. But the last moment has the privilege of hope.  
 CASS. The day is here. Little should I gain by flight. 1260  
 LEAD. This patience of yours comes from a brave soul.  
 CASS. A happy man is never paid that compliment.  
 LEAD. But to die with credit graces a mortal man.  
 CASS. Oh my father! You and your noble sons!  
 [*She approaches the door, then suddenly recoils.*]  
 LEAD. What is it? What is the fear that drives you back? 1265  
 CASS. Faugh.  
 LEAD. Why faugh? Or is this some hallucination?  
 CASS. These walls breathe out a death that drips with blood.  
 LEAD. Not so. It is only the smell of the sacrifice.  
 CASS. It is like a breath out of a charnel-house. 1270  
 LEAD. You think our palace burns odd incense then!

CASS. But I will go to lament among the dead

My lot and Agamemnon's. Enough of life!

Strangers,

I am not afraid like a bird afraid of a bush

1275

But witness you my words after my death

When a woman dies in return for me a woman

And a man falls for a man with a wicked wife.

I ask this service, being about to die.

LEAD. Alas, I pity you for the death you have foretold.

1280

CASS. One more speech I have; I do not wish to raise

The dirge for my own self. But to the sun I pray

In face of his last light that my avengers

May make my murderers pay for this my death,

Death of a woman slave, an easy victim.

1285

[*She enters the palace.*]

LEAD. Ah the fortunes of men! When they go well

A shadow sketch would match them, and in ill-fortune

The dab of a wet sponge destroys the drawing.

It is not myself but the life of man I pity.

CHOR. Prosperity in all men cries

1290

For more prosperity. Even the owner

Of the finger-pointed-at palace never shuts

His door against her, saying "Come no more."

So to our king the blessed gods had granted

To take the town of Priam, and heaven-favoured

1295

He reaches home. But now if for former bloodshed

He must pay blood

And dying for the dead shall cause

Other deaths in atonement

What man could boast he was born

1300

Secure, who heard this story?

AGAM. [*Within*] Oh! I am struck a mortal blow—within!

LEAD. Silence! Listen. Who calls out, wounded with a mortal stroke?

AGAM. Again—the second blow—I am struck again.

LEAD. You heard the king cry out. I think the deed is done.

1305

Let us see if we can concert some sound proposal.

2ND OLD MAN. Well, I will tell you my opinion—

Raise an alarm, summon the folk to the palace.

3RD OLD MAN. I say burst in with all speed possible,

Convict them of the deed while still the sword is wet.

1310

4TH OLD MAN. And I am partner to some such suggestion.

I am for taking some course. No time to dawdle.

5TH OLD MAN. The case is plain. This is but the beginning.

They are going to set up dictatorship in the state.



6TH OLD MAN. We are wasting time. The assassins tread to earth  
1315

The decencies of delay and gives their hands no sleep.

7TH OLD MAN. I do not know what plan I could hit on to propose.

The man who acts is in the position to plan.

8TH OLD MAN. So I think, too, for I am at a loss

To raise the dead man up again with words. 1320

9TH OLD MAN. Then to stretch out our life shall we yield thus

To the rule of these profaners of the house?

10TH OLD MAN. It is not to be endured. To die is better.

Death is more comfortable than tyranny.

11TH OLD MAN. And are we on the evidence of groans 1325

Going to give oracle that the prince is dead?

12TH OLD MAN. We must know the facts for sure and *then* be angry.

Guesswork is not the same as certain knowledge.

LEAD. Then all of you back me and approve this plan—

To ascertain how it is with Agamemnon 1330

[*The doors of the palace open, revealing the bodies of AGAMEMNON and CASSANDRA. CLYTEMNESTRA stands above them.*]

CLYT. Much having been said before to fit the moment,

To say the opposite now will not outface me.

How else could one serving hate upon the hated,

Thought to be friends, hang high the nets of doom

To preclude all leaping out? 1335

For me I have long been training for this match,

I tried a fall and won—a victory overdue.

I stand here where I struck, above my victims;

So I contrived it—this I will not deny—

That he could neither fly nor ward off death; 1340

Inextricable like a net for fishes

I cast about him a vicious wealth of raiment

And struck him twice and with two groans he loosed

His limbs beneath him, and upon him fallen

I deal him the third blow to the God beneath the earth, 1345

To the safe keeper of the dead a votive gift,

And with that he spits his life out where he lies

And smartly spouting blood he sprays me with

The sombre drizzle of bloody dew and I

Rejoice no less than in God's gift of rain 1350

The crops are glad when the ear of corn gives birth.

1345. *third blow to the God beneath the earth*: like the third libation to Zeus above.

These things being so, you, elders of Argos,  
 Rejoice if rejoice you will. Mine is the glory.  
 And if I could pay this corpse his due libation  
 I should be right to pour it and more than right; 1355  
 With so many horrors this man mixed and filled  
 The bowl—and, coming home, has drained the draught himself.

LEAD. Your speech astonishes us. This brazen boast  
 Above the man who was your king and husband!

CLYT. You challenge me as a woman without foresight 1360  
 But I with unflinching heart to you who know  
 Speak. And you, whether you will praise or blame,  
 It makes no matter. Here lies Agamemnon,  
 My husband, dead, the work of this right hand,  
 An honest workman. There you have the facts. 1365

CHOR. Woman, what poisoned  
 Herb of the earth have you tasted  
 Or potion of the flowing sea  
 To undertake this killing and the people's curses?  
 You threw down, you cut off—The people will cast you out, 1370  
 Black abomination to the town.

CLYT. Now your verdict—in my case—is exile  
 And to have the people's hatred, the public curses,  
 Though then in no way you opposed this man  
 Who carelessly, as if it were a head of sheep 1375  
 Out of the abundance of his fleecy flocks,  
 Sacrificed his own daughter, to me the dearest  
 Fruit of travail, charm for the Thracian winds.  
 He was the one to have banished from this land,  
 Pay off the pollution. But when you hear what I 1380  
 Have done, you judge severely. But I warn you—  
 Threaten me on the understanding that I am ready  
 For two alternatives—Win by force the right  
 To rule me, but, if God brings about the contrary,  
 Late in time you will have to learn self-discipline. 1385

CHOR. You are high in the thoughts,  
 You speak extravagant things,  
 After the soiling murder your crazy heart  
 Fancies your forehead with a smear of blood.  
 Unhonoured, unfriended, you must 1390  
 Pay for a blow with a blow.

CLYT. Listen then to this—the sanction of my oaths:  
 By the Justice totting up my child's atonement,  
 By the Avenging Doom and Fiend to whom I killed this man,  
 For me hope walks not in the rooms of fear 1395  
 So long as my fire is lit upon my hearth

- By Aegisthus, loyal to me as he was before.  
 The man who outraged me lies here,  
 The darling of each courtesan at Troy,  
 And here with him is the prisoner clairvoyant,  
 The fortune-teller that he took to bed, 1400  
 Who shares his bed as once his bench on shipboard,  
 A loyal mistress. Both have their deserts.  
 He lies so; and she who like a swan  
 Sang her last dying lament 1405  
 Lies his lover, and the sight contributes  
 An appetiser to my own bed's pleasure.
- CHOR. Ah would some quick death come not overpainful,  
 Not overlong on the sickbed,  
 Establishing in us the ever- 1410  
 Lasting unending sleep now that our guardian  
 Has fallen, the kindest of men,  
 Who suffering much for a woman  
 By a woman has lost his life.  
 O Helen, insane, being one 1415  
 One to have destroyed so many  
 And many souls under Troy,  
 Now is your work complete, blossomed not for oblivion,  
 Unfading stain of blood. Here now, if in any home,  
 Is Discord, here is a man's deep-rooted ruin. 1420
- CLYT. Do not pray for the portion of death  
 Weighed down by these things, do not turn  
 Your anger on Helen as destroyer of men,  
 One woman destroyer of many  
 Lives of Greck men, 1425  
 A hurt that cannot be healed.
- CHOR. O Evil Spirit, falling on the family,  
 On the two sons of Atreus and using  
 Two sisters in heart as your tools,  
 A power that bites to the heart— 1430  
 See on the body  
 Perched like a raven he gloats  
 Harshly croaking his hymn.
- CLYT. Ah, now you have amended your lips' opinion,  
 Calling upon this family's three times gorged 1435  
 Genius—demon who breeds  
 Blood-hankering lust in the belly:  
 Before the old sore heals, new pus collects.
- CHOR. It is a great spirit—great—  
 You tell of, harsh in anger, 1440  
 A ghastly tale, alas,

Of unsatisfied disaster  
 Brought by Zeus, by Zeus,  
 Cause and worker of all.

For without Zeus what comes to pass among us?  
 Which of these things is outside Providence?

1445

O my king, my king,  
 How shall I pay you in tears,  
 Speak my affection in words?  
 You lie in that spider's web,  
 In a desecrating death breathe out your life,  
 Lie ignominiously  
 Defeated by a crooked death  
 And the two-edged cleaver's stroke.

1450

CLYT. You say this is *my* work—mine?

1455

Do not cozen yourself that I am Agamemnon's wife.  
 Masquerading as the wife  
 Of the corpse there the old sharp-witted Genius  
 Of Atreus who gave the cruel banquet  
 Has paid with a grown man's life  
 The due for children dead.

1460

CHOR. That you are not guilty of  
 This murder who will attest?

No, but you may have been abetted  
 By some ancestral Spirit of Revenge.  
 Wading a millrace of the family's blood  
 The black Manslayer forces a forward path  
 To make the requital at last

1465

For the eaten children, the blood-clot cold with time.

O my king, my king,  
 How shall I pay you in tears,  
 Speak my affection in words?  
 You lie in that spider's web,  
 In a desecrating death breathe out your life,  
 Lie ignominiously  
 Defeated by a crooked death  
 And the two-edged cleaver's stroke.

1470

1475

CLYT. Did he not, too, contrive a crooked

Horror for the house? My child by him,  
 Shoot that I raised, much-wept-for Iphigencia,  
 He treated her like this;

1480

So suffering like this he need not make  
 Any great brag in Hell having paid with death  
 Dealt by the sword for work of his own beginning.

CHOR. I am at a loss for thought, I lack  
 All nimble counsel as to where

1485

To turn when the house is falling.  
 I fear the house-collapsing crashing  
 Blizzard of blood—of which these drops are earnest.  
 Now is Destiny sharpening her justice  
 On other whetstones for a new infliction.

1490

O earth, earth, if only you had received me  
 Before I saw this man lie here as if in bed  
 In a bath lined with silver.

Who will bury him? Who will keen him?  
 Will you, having killed your own husband,  
 Dare now to lament him  
 And after great wickedness make

1495

Unamending amends to his ghost?  
 And who above this godlike hero's grave  
 Pouring praises and tears

1500

Will grieve with a genuine heart?

CLYT. It is not your business to attend to that.

By my hand he fell low, lies low and dead,  
 And I shall bury him low down in the earth,  
 And his household need not weep him  
 For Iphigeneia his daughter

1505

Tenderly, as is right,  
 Will meet her father at the rapid ferry of sorrows,  
 Put her arms round him and kiss him!

1510

CHOR. Reproach answers reproach,

It is hard to decide,  
 The catcher is caught, the killer pays for his kill.  
 But the law abides while Zeus abides enthroned  
 That the wrongdoer suffers. That is established.  
 Who could expel from the house the seed of the Curse?  
 The race is soldered in sockets of Doom and Vengeance.

1515

CLYT. In this you say what is right and the will of God.

But for my part I am ready to make a contract  
 With the Evil Genius of the House of Atreus  
 To accept what has been till now, hard though it is,  
 But that for the future he shall leave this house  
 And wear away some other stock with deaths  
 Imposed among themselves. Of my possessions  
 A small part will suffice if only I  
 Can rid these walls of the mad exchange of murder.

1520

1525

[Enter AEGISTHUS, followed by soldiers.]

AEGISTHUS. O welcome light of a justice-dealing day!  
 From now on I will say that the gods, avenging men,  
 Look down from above on the crimes of earth,

Seeing as I do in woven robes of the Furies 1530

This man lying here—a sight to warm my heart—

Paying for the crooked violence of his father.

For his father Atreus, when he ruled the country,

Because his power was challenged, hounded out

From state and home his own brother Thyestes. 1535

My father—let me be plain—was this Thyestes,

Who later came back home a suppliant,

There, miserable, found so much asylum

As not to die on the spot, stain the ancestral floor.

But to show his hospitality godless Atreus 1540

Gave him an eager if not a loving welcome,

Pretending a day of feasting and rich meats

Served my father with his children's flesh.

The hands and feet, fingers and toes, he hid

At the bottom of the dish. My father sitting apart 1545

Took unknowing the unrecognizable portion

And ate of a dish that has proved, as you see, expensive.

But when he knew he had eaten worse than poison

He fell back groaning, vomiting their flesh,

And invoking a hopeless doom on the sons of Pelops 1550

Kicked over the table to confirm his curse—

So may the whole race perish!

Result of this—you see this man lie here.

I stitched this murder together; it was my title.

Me the third son he left, an unweaned infant, 1555

To share the bitterness of my father's exile.

But I grew up and Justice brought me back,

I grappled this man while still beyond his door,

Having pieced together the programme of his ruin.

So now would even death be beautiful to me 1560

Having seen Agamemnon in the nets of Justice.

**LEAD.** Aegisthus. I cannot respect brutality in distress.

You claim that you deliberately killed this prince

And that you alone planned this pitiful murder.

Be sure that in your turn your head shall not escape 1565

The people's volleyed curses mixed with stones.

**ARG.** Do you speak so who sit at the lower oar

While those on the upper bench control the ship?

Old as you are, you will find it is a heavy load

To go to school when old to learn the lesson of tact. 1570

For old age, too, gaol and hunger are fine

Instructors in wisdom, second-sighted doctors.

**1590.** *Pelops*: the founder of the line.

**You have eyes. Cannot you see?**

**Do not kick against the pricks. The blow will hurt you.**

**LEAD.** You woman waiting in the house for those who return from battle 1575

**While you seduce their wives! Was it you devised  
The death of a master of armies?**

**AEG.** And these words, too, prepare the way for tears.

**Contrast your voice with the voice of Orpheus: he  
Led all things after him bewitched with joy, but you 1580  
Having stung me with your silly yelps shall be  
Led off yourself, to prove more mild when mastered.**

**LEAD.** Indeed! So you are now to be king of Argos,  
You who, when you had plotted the king's death,  
Did not even dare to do that thing yourself! 1585

**AEG.** No. For the trick of it was clearly woman's work.

**I was suspect, an enemy of old.**

**But now I shall try with Agamemnon's wealth**

**To rule the people. Any who is disobedient**

**I will harness in a heavy yoke, no tracehorse work for him 1590**

**Like barley-fed colt, but hateful hunger lodging  
Beside him in the dark will see his temper soften.**

**LEAD.** Why with your cowardly soul did you yourself  
Not strike this man but left that work to a woman  
Whose presence pollutes our country and its gods? 1595  
But Orestes—does he somewhere see the light  
That he may come back here by favour of fortune  
And kill this pair and prove the final victor?

**AEG.** [*Summoning his guards*] Well, if such is your design in deeds  
and words, you will quickly learn—

**Here my friends, here my guards, there is work for you at  
hand. 1600**

**LEAD.** Come then, hands on hilts, be each and all of us prepared.  
[*The old men and the guards threaten each other.*]

**AEG.** Very well! I too am ready to meet death with sword in hand.

**LEAD.** We are glad you speak of dying. We accept your words for  
luck.

**CLYT.** No, my dearest, do not so. Add no more to the train of wrong.  
To reap these many present wrongs is harvest enough of  
misery. 1605

**Enough of misery. Start no more. Our hands are red.**

**But do you, and you old men, go home and yield to fate in time,  
In time before you suffer. We have acted as we had to act.**

1590. *tracehorse*: an extra horse, outside the yoke, which does less work than the others.

If only our afflictions now could prove enough, we should agree—  
We who have been so hardly mauled in the heavy claws of the  
evil god. 1610

So stands my word, a woman's, if any man thinks fit to hear.

AEG. But to think that these should thus pluck the blooms of an  
idle tongue

And should throw out words like these, giving the evil god his  
chance,

And should miss the path of prudence and insult their master so!

LEAD. It is not the Argive way to fawn upon a cowardly man. 1615

AEG. Perhaps. But I in later days will take further steps with you.

LEAD. Not if the god who rules the family guides Orestes to his  
home.

AEG. Yes. I know that men in exile feed themselves on barren hopes.

LEAD. Go on, grow fat defiling justice . . . while you have your  
hour.

AEG. Do not think you will not pay me a price for your  
stupidity. 1620

LEAD. Boast on in your self-assurance, like a cock beside his hen.

CLYT. Pay no heed, Aegisthus, to these futile barkings. You and I,  
Masters of this house, from now shall order all things well.

*[They enter the palace.]*

## THUCYDIDES

### History of the Peloponnesian War \*

*[Athenian Democracy—The Athenians from the  
Enemy's Point of View]†*

[This is an extract from a speech made by the representatives of Corinth, a city bitterly hostile to Athens, at a congress of Spartan allies meeting at Sparta in 432 B.C. to discuss the question of peace or war with Athens. The Spartans were hesitant, and in this speech the Corinthian ambassadors urge them to take a firm stand.]

You have never considered what manner of men are these Athenians with whom you will have to fight, and how utterly unlike yourselves. They are revolutionary, equally quick in the conception and in the execution of every new plan; while you are conservative—careful only to keep what you have, originating nothing, and not acting even when action is most necessary. They are bold beyond their strength; they run risks which prudence would condemn; and in the midst of misfortune they are full of hope. Whereas it is your

\* Translated by Benjamin Jowett.

† From Book I, Chapter 70.



nature, though strong, to act feebly; when your plans are most prudent, to distrust them; and when calamities come upon you, to think that you will never be delivered from them. They are impetuous, and you are dilatory; they are always abroad, and you are always at home. For they hope to gain something by leaving their homes; but you are afraid that any new enterprise may imperil what you have already. When conquerors, they pursue their victory to the utmost; when defeated, they fall back the least. Their bodies they devote to their country as though they belonged to other men; their true self is their mind, which is most truly their own when employed in her service. When they do not carry out an intention which they have formed, they seem to have sustained a personal bereavement; when an enterprise succeeds, they have gained a mere instalment of what is to come; but if they fail, they at once conceive new hopes and so fill up the void. With them alone to hope is to have, for they lose not a moment in the execution of an idea. This is the lifelong task, full of danger and toil, which they are always imposing upon themselves. None enjoy their good things less, because they are always seeking for more. To do their duty is their only holiday, and they deem the quiet of inaction to be as disagreeable as the most tiresome business. If a man should say of them, in a word, that they were born neither to have peace themselves nor to allow peace to other men, he would simply speak the truth.

[*Athenian Democracy—The Athenians, a Self-Portrait*]\*

During the same winter,<sup>1</sup> in accordance with an old national custom, the funeral of those who first fell in this war was celebrated by the Athenians at the public charge. The ceremony is as follows: Three days before the celebration they erect a tent in which the bones of the dead are laid out, and every one brings to his own dead any offering which he pleases. At the time of the funeral the bones are placed in chests of cypress wood, which are conveyed on hearses; there is one chest for each tribe.<sup>2</sup> They also carry a single empty litter decked with a pall for all whose bodies are missing, and cannot be recovered after the battle. The procession is accompanied by any one who chooses, whether citizen or stranger, and the female relatives of the deceased are present at the place of interment and make lamentation. The public sepulchre is situated in the most beautiful spot outside the walls; there they always bury those who fall in war; only after the battle of Marathon<sup>3</sup> the dead, in recognition of their pre-eminent valor, were interred on the field. When the remains

\* From Book II, Chapters 34-46.

1. 431-430 B.C.

2. The Athenian citizen body was organized in ten tribes.

3. on the coast of Attica. In this battle (490 B.C.) the Athenians, alone except for a small contingent from the neighboring city of Plataea, defeated a Persian expeditionary force.

have been laid in the earth, some man of known ability and high reputation, chosen by the city, delivers a suitable oration over them; after which the people depart. Such is the manner of interment; and the ceremony was repeated from time to time throughout the war. Over those who were the first buried Pericles<sup>4</sup> was chosen to speak. At the fitting moment he advanced from the sepulchre to a lofty stage, which had been erected in order that he might be heard as far as possible by the multitude, and spoke as follows:

"Most of those who have spoken here before me have commended the lawgiver who added this oration to our other funeral customs; it seemed to them a worthy thing that such an honor should be given at their burial to the dead who have fallen on the field of battle. But I should have preferred that, when men's deeds have been brave, they should be honored in deed only, and with such an honor as this public funeral, which you are now witnessing. Then the reputation of many would not have been imperilled on the eloquence or want of eloquence of one, and their virtues believed or not as he spoke well or ill. For it is difficult to say neither too little nor too much; and even moderation is apt not to give the impression of truthfulness. The friend of the dead who knows the facts is likely to think that the words of the speaker fall short of his knowledge and of his wishes; another who is not so well informed, when he hears of anything which surpasses his own powers, will be envious and will suspect exaggeration. Mankind are tolerant of the praises of others so long as each hearer thinks that he can do as well or nearly as well himself, but, when the speaker rises above him, jealousy is aroused and he begins to be incredulous. However, since our ancestors have set the seal of their approval upon the practice, I must obey, and to the utmost of my power shall endeavor to satisfy the wishes and beliefs of all who hear me.

"I will speak first of our ancestors, for it is right and becoming that now, when we are lamenting the dead, a tribute should be paid to their memory. There has never been a time when they did not inhabit this land,<sup>5</sup> which by their valor they have handed down from generation to generation, and we have received from them a free state. But if they were worthy of praise, still more were our fathers, who added to their inheritance, and after many a struggle transmitted to us their sons this great empire.<sup>6</sup> And we ourselves

4. the statesman who guided the policies of the Athenian democracy during its greatest years. He died in the next year, 430 B.C.

5. The Athenians boasted uninterrupted descent from the first inhabitants of the land.

6. After the defeat of the Persian

invaders in 479 B.C. the Athenians organized a league of the Greek cities on the islands and the Asiatic mainland for defense against any renewed Persian attack; as the years went by this league was transformed from a league dominated by the Athenians into an empire which they ruled.

assembled here to-day, who are still most of us in the vigor of life, have chiefly done the work of improvement, and have richly endowed our city with all things, so that she is sufficient for herself both in peace and war. Of the military exploits by which our various possessions were acquired, or of the energy with which we or our fathers drove back the tide of war, Hellenic or Barbarian,<sup>7</sup> I will not speak; for the tale would be long and is familiar to you. But before I praise the dead, I should like to point out by what principles of action we rose to power, and under what institutions and through what manner of life our empire became great. For I conceive that such thoughts are not unsuited to the occasion,<sup>8</sup> and that this numerous assembly of citizens and strangers may profitably listen to them.

"Our form of government does not enter into rivalry with the institutions of others. We do not copy our neighbors, but are an example to them. It is true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the many and not of the few.<sup>9</sup> But while the law secures equal justice to all alike in their private disputes, the claim of excellence is also recognized; and when a citizen is in any way distinguished, he is preferred to the public service, not as a matter of privilege, but as the reward of merit. Neither is poverty a bar, but a man may benefit his country whatever be the obscurity of his condition. There is no exclusiveness in our public life, and in our private intercourse we are not suspicious of one another, nor angry with our neighbor if he does what he likes; we do not put on sour looks at him which, though harmless, are not pleasant. While we are thus unconstrained in our private intercourse, a spirit of reverence pervades our public acts; we are prevented from doing wrong by respect for authority and for the laws, having an especial regard to those which are ordained for the protection of the injured as well as to those unwritten laws which bring upon the transgressor of them the reprobation of the general sentiment.

"And we have not forgotten to provide for our weary spirits many relaxations from toil; we have regular games and sacrifices throughout the year; at home the style of our life is refined; and the delight which we daily feel in all these things helps to banish melancholy.

7. *Hellenic or Barbarian*: Greek or Persian.

8. Thucydides tells his readers (Book I, Chapter 22) how he composed this and other speeches: "As to the speeches . . . it was hard for me, and for others who reported them to me, to recollect the exact words. I have therefore put into the mouth of each speaker the sentiments proper to the occasion, ex-

pressed as I thought he would be likely to express them, while at the same time I endeavoured, as nearly as I could, to give the general purport of what was actually said."

9. The word "democracy" is composed of the two Greek words *demos* and *kratos*, which mean "people" and "power" respectively.

Because of the greatness of our city the fruits of the whole earth flow in upon us; so that we enjoy the goods of other countries as freely as of our own.

"Then, again, our military training is in many respects superior to that of our adversaries. Our city is thrown open to the world, and we never expel a foreigner or prevent him from seeing or learning anything of which the secret if revealed to an enemy might profit him.<sup>10</sup> We rely not upon management or trickery, but upon our own hearts and hands. And in the matter of education, whereas they from early youth are always undergoing laborious exercises which are to make them brave, we live at ease, and yet are equally ready to face the perils which they face. And here is the proof. The Lacedaemonians<sup>11</sup> come into Attica not by themselves, but with their whole confederacy following; we go alone into a neighbor's country; and although our opponents are fighting for their homes and we on a foreign soil, we have seldom any difficulty in overcoming them. Our enemies have never yet felt our united strength; the care of a navy divides our attention, and on land we are obliged to send our own citizens everywhere. But they, if they meet and defeat a part of our army, are as proud as if they had routed us all, and when defeated they pretend to have been vanquished by us all.

"If then we prefer to meet danger with a light heart but without laborious training, and with a courage which is gained by habit and not enforced by law, are we not greatly the gainers? Since we do not anticipate the pain, although, when the hour comes, we can be as brave as those who never allow themselves to rest; and thus too our city is equally admirable in peace and in war. For we are lovers of the beautiful, yet simple in our tastes, and we cultivate the mind without loss of manliness. Wealth we employ, not for talk and ostentation, but when there is a real use for it. To avow poverty with us is no disgrace: the true disgrace is in doing nothing to avoid it. An Athenian citizen does not neglect the state because he takes care of his own household; and even those of us who are engaged in business have a very fair idea of politics. We alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs, not as a harmless, but as a useless character; and if few of us are originators, we are all sound judges of a policy. The great impediment to action is, in our opinion, not discussion, but the want of that knowledge which is gained by discussion preparatory to action. For we have a peculiar power of thinking before we act and of acting too, whereas other men are courageous from ignorance but hesitate upon reflection. And they are surely to be esteemed the bravest spirits who, having the clearest

10. in contrast to Sparta, where foreigners were admitted only on state business and then kept under surveillance. The next sentence contrasts the

Athenian system of education with the Spartan.

11. Spartans.

sense both of the pains and pleasures of life, do not on that account shrink from danger. In doing good, again, we are unlike others; we make our friends by conferring, not by receiving favors. Now he who confers a favor is the firmer friend, because he would fain by kindness keep alive the memory of an obligation; but the recipient is colder in his feelings, because he knows that in requiting another's generosity he will not be winning gratitude, but only paying a debt. We alone do good to our neighbors not upon a calculation of interest, but in the confidence of freedom and in a frank and fearless spirit. To sum up: I say that Athens is the school of Hellas, and that the individual Athenian in his own person seems to have the power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace. This is no passing and idle word, but truth and fact; and the assertion is verified by the position to which these qualities have raised the state. For in the hour of trial Athens alone among her contemporaries is superior to the report of her. No enemy who comes against her is indignant at the reverses which he sustains at the hands of such a city; no subject complains that his masters are unworthy of him. And we shall assuredly not be without witnesses; there are mighty monuments of our power which will make us the wonder of this and of succeeding ages;<sup>12</sup> we shall not need the praises of Homer or of any other panegyrist whose poetry may please for the moment, although his representation of the facts will not bear the light of day. For we have compelled every land and every sea to open a path for our valor, and have everywhere planted eternal memorials of our friendship and of our enmity. Such is the city for whose sake these men nobly fought and died; they could not bear the thought that she might be taken from them; and every one of us who survive should gladly toil on her behalf.

"I have dwelt upon the greatness of Athens because I want to show you that we are contending for a higher prize than those who enjoy none of these privileges, and to establish by manifest proof the merit of these men whom I am now commemorating. Their loftiest praise has been already spoken. For in magnifying the city I have magnified them, and men like them whose virtues made her glorious. And of how few Hellenes can it be said as of them, that their deeds when weighed in the balance have been found equal to their fame! Methinks that a death such as theirs has been given the true measure of a man's worth; it may be the first revelation of his virtues, but is at any rate their final seal. For even those who come short in other ways may justly plead the valor with which they have fought for their country; they have blotted out the evil with the

12. The ruins of the fifth-century buildings on the Acropolis of Athens are still the wonder of the world.

good, and have benefited the state more by their public services than they have injured her by their private actions. None of these men were enervated by wealth or hesitated to resign the pleasures of life; none of them put off the evil day in the hope, natural to poverty, that a man, though poor, may one day become rich. But, deeming that the punishment of their enemies was sweeter than any of these things, and that they could fall in no nobler cause, they determined at the hazard of their lives to be honorably avenged, and to leave the rest. They resigned to hope their unknown chance of happiness; but in the face of death they resolved to rely upon themselves alone. And when the moment came they were minded to resist and suffer, rather than to fly and save their lives; they ran away from the word of dishonor, but on the battle-field their feet stood fast, and in an instant, at the height of their fortune, they passed away from the scene, not of their fear, but of their glory.

"Such was the end of these men; they were worthy of Athens, and the living need not desire to have a more heroic spirit, although they may pray for a less fatal issue. The value of such a spirit is not to be expressed in words. Any one can discourse to you for ever about the advantages of a brave defence which you know already. But instead of listening to him I would have you day by day fix your eyes upon the greatness of Athens, until you become filled with the love of her; and when you are impressed by the spectacle of her glory, reflect that this empire has been acquired by men who knew their duty and had the courage to do it, who in the hour of conflict had the fear of dishonor always present to them, and who, if ever they failed in an enterprise, would not allow their virtues to be lost to their country, but freely gave their lives to her as the fairest offering which they could present at her feast. The sacrifice which they collectively made was individually repaid to them; for they received again each one for himself a praise which grows not old, and the noblest of all sepulchres—I speak not of that in which their remains are laid, but of that in which their glory survives, and is proclaimed always and on every fitting occasion both in word and deed. For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men; not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions in their own country, but in foreign lands there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not on stone but in the hearts of men. Make them your examples, and, esteeming courage to be freedom and freedom to be happiness, do not weigh too nicely the perils of war. The unfortunate who has no hope of a change for the better has less reason to throw away his life than the prosperous who, if he survive, is always liable to a change for the worse, and to whom any accidental fall makes the most serious difference. To a man of spirit,

cowardice and disaster coming together are far more bitter than death, striking him unperceived at a time when he is full of courage and animated by the general hope.

"Wherefore I do not now commiserate the parents of the dead who stand here; I would rather comfort them. You know that your life has been passed amid manifold vicissitudes; and that they may be deemed fortunate who have gained most honor, whether an honorable death like theirs, or an honorable sorrow like yours, and whose days have been so ordered that the term of their happiness is likewise the term of their life. I know how hard it is to make you feel this, when the good fortune of others will too often remind you of the gladness which once lightened your hearts. And sorrow is felt at the want of those blessings, not which a man never knew, but which were a part of his life before they were taken from him. Some of you are of an age at which they may hope to have other children, and they ought to bear their sorrow better; not only will the children who may hereafter be born make them forget their own lost ones, but the city will be doubly a gainer. She will not be left desolate, and she will be safer. For a man's counsel cannot have equal weight or worth, when he alone has no children to risk in the general danger. To those of you who have passed their prime, I say: 'Congratulate yourselves that you have been happy during the greater part of your days; remember that your life of sorrow will not last long, and be comforted by the glory of those who are gone. For the love of honor alone is ever young, and not riches, as some say, but honor is the delight of men when they are old and useless.'

"To you who are the sons and brothers of the departed, I see that the struggle to emulate them will be an arduous one. For all men praise the dead, and, however pre-eminent your virtue may be hardly will you be thought, I do not say to equal, but even to approach them. The living have their rivals and detractors, but when a man is out of the way, the honor and good-will which he receives is unalloyed. And, if I am to speak of womanly virtues to those of you who will henceforth be widows, let me sum them up in one short admonition: To a woman not to show more weakness than is natural to her sex is a great glory, and not to be talked about for good or for evil among men.

"I have paid the required tribute, in obedience to the law, making use of such fitting words as I had. The tribute of deeds has been paid in part; for the dead have been honorably interred, and it remains only that their children should be maintained at the public charge until they are grown up; this is the solid prize with which, as with a garland, Athens crowns her sons living and dead, after a struggle like theirs. For where the rewards of virtue are greatest,

there the noblest citizens are enlisted in the service of the state. And now, when you have duly lamented, every one of his own dead, you may depart."

## SOPHOCLES

(495-406 B.C.)

## King Oedipus\*

Laius, son of Labdacus, king of Thebes, was informed by the oracle that if he had a son, the child would kill his father and marry his mother. In spite of this warning, Laius did beget a son, and he and his wife Jocasta gave the baby to a shepherd, with instructions to abandon it on the mountainside near Thebes. To make the child's death doubly sure, they pierced its feet and tied them together. The shepherd, however, gave the child to another shepherd, who came from Corinthian territory on the other side of the range, and who gave the child to Polybus and Merope, king and queen of Corinth, who were childless. Oedipus, as the child was called, grew up to manhood in Corinth, and, disturbed by a taunt that he was not the son of Polybus, went to the oracle of Apollo to learn the truth about his birth. The oracle answered only that he was destined to kill his father and marry his mother. He decided never to return to Corinth, and made his way toward Thebes. On the way he became involved in a quarrel on the highway, as a result of which he killed his father, Laius, the leader of those with whom he had quarreled. Arriving at Thebes, he found the city a prey to the Sphinx, who refused to leave the city until someone answered her riddle. Oedipus did so, the Sphinx withdrew, and the grateful Thebans offered Oedipus the throne and the hand of Jocasta, the queen. Oedipus accepted both offers, and for many years ruled the city wisely and well. The play opens at a moment when Thebes is suffering from a plague of mysterious origin; the people, led by their priests, come to beg Oedipus for help.

*Characters*

OEDIPUS, *King of Thebes*  
 JOCASTA, *wife of Oedipus*  
 ANTIGONE, *daughter of Oedipus*  
 ISMENE, *daughter of Oedipus*  
 CREON, *brother-in-law of Oedipus*

TIRESIAS, *a seer*  
 PRIEST  
 MESSENGERS  
 HERDSMAN  
 CHORUS

\* Probably first produced in the opening years of the Peloponnesian War, which began in 431 B.C. Our text is a

translation by William Butler Yeats, from *Sophocles' King Oedipus*, copyright 1928 by The Macmillan Company.



**OEDIPUS.** Children, descendants of old Cadmus,<sup>1</sup> why do you come before me, why do you carry branches of suppliants,<sup>2</sup> while the city smokes with incense and murmurs with prayer and lamentation? I would not learn from any mouth but yours, old man, therefore I question you myself. Do you know of anything that I can do and have not done? How can I, being the man I am, being King Oedipus, do other than all I know? I were indeed hard of heart did I not pity such suppliants.

**PRIEST.** Oedipus, King of my country, we who stand before your door are of all ages, some too young to have walked so many miles, some—priests of Zeus such as I—too old. Among us stand the pick of the young men, and behind in the marketplaces the people throng, carrying suppliant branches. We all stand here because the city stumbles towards death, hardly able to raise up its head. A blight has fallen upon the fruitful blossoms of the land, a blight upon flock and field and upon the bed of marriage—plague ravages the city. Oedipus, King, not God but foremost of living men, seeing that when you first came to this town of Thebes you freed us from that harsh singer, the riddling Sphinx,<sup>3</sup> we beseech you, all we suppliants, to find some help; whether you find it by your power as a man, or because, being near the Gods, a God has whispered you. Uplift our State; think upon your fame; your coming brought us luck, be lucky to us still; remember that it is better to rule over men than over a waste place, since neither walled town nor ship is anything if it be empty and no man within it.

**OEDIP.** My unhappy children! I know well what need has brought you, what suffering you endure; yet, sufferers though you be, there is not a single one whose suffering is as mine—each mourns himself, but my soul mourns the city, myself, and you. It is not therefore as if you came to arouse a sleeping man. No! Be certain that I have wept many tears and searched hither and thither for some remedy. I have already done the only thing that came into my head for all my search. I have sent the son of Menoeceus, Creon, my own wife's brother, to the Pythian House of Phoebus,<sup>4</sup> to hear if deed or word of mine may yet deliver this town. I am troubled, for he is a long time away—a longer time than should

1. founder and first king of the city of Thebes.

2. The suppliant carried a branch, which he laid on the altar and left there until his request was granted. At the end of this scene Oedipus tells the suppliants to take their branches off the altar.

3. the winged female monster that terrorized the city of Thebes until her riddle was answered. It was answered

by Oedipus. The riddle was, "What is it that walks on four feet and two feet and three feet and has only one voice; when it walks on most feet it is weakest?" Oedipus' answer was, "Man." (He has four feet as a child crawling, and three in old age, when he walks with the aid of a stick.)

4. Pythian House of Phoebus: the oracle of Phoebus Apollo at Delphi.

be—but when he comes I shall not be an honest man unless I do whatever the God commands.

PRIEST. You have spoken at the right time. They have just signalled to us that Creon has arrived.

OEDIP. O King Apollo, may he bring brighter fortune, for his face is shining!

PRIEST. He brings good news, for he is crowned with bay.

OEDIP. We shall know soon. Brother-in-law, Menoeceus' son, what news from the God?

CREON. Good news; for pain turns to pleasure when we have set the crooked straight.

OEDIP. But what is the oracle?—so far the news is neither good nor bad.

CREON. If you would hear it with all these about you, I am ready to speak. Or do we go within?

OEDIP. Speak before all. The sorrow I endure is less for my own life than these.

CREON. Then, with your leave, I speak. Our lord Phoebus bids us drive out a defiling thing that has been cherished in this land.

OEDIP. By what purification?

CREON. King Laius was our King before you came to pilot us.

OEDIP. I know—but not of my own knowledge, for I never saw him.

CREON. He was killed; and the God now bids us revenge it on his murderers, whoever they be.

OEDIP. Where shall we come upon their track after all these years? Did he meet his death in house or field, at home or in some foreign land?

CREON. In a foreign land: he was journeying to Delphi.

OEDIP. Did no fellow-traveller see the deed? Was there none there who could be questioned?

CREON. All perished but one man who fled in terror and could tell for certain but one thing of all he had seen.

OEDIP. One thing might be a clue to many things.

CREON. He said that they were fallen upon by a great troop of robbers.

OEDIP. What robbers would be so daring unless bribed from here?

CREON. Such things were indeed guessed at, but Laius once dead no avenger arose. We were amid our troubles.

OEDIP. But when royalty had fallen what troubles could have hindered search?

CREON. The riddling Sphinx put those dark things out of our thoughts—we thought of what had come to our own doors.

OEDIP. But I will start afresh and make the dark things plain. In doing right by Laius I protect myself, for whoever slew Laius might turn a hand against me. Come, my children, rise up from

the altar steps; lift up these suppliant boughs and let all the children of Cadmus be called thither that I may search out everything and find for all happiness or misery as God wills.

PRIEST. May Phoebus, sender of the oracle, come with it and be our saviour and deliverer!

[*The CHORUS enters.*]

CHORUS. What message comes to famous Thebes from the Golden House?<sup>5</sup>

What message of disaster from that sweet-throated Zeus?<sup>6</sup>  
What monstrous thing our fathers saw do the seasons bring?  
Or what that no man ever saw, what new monstrous thing?  
Trembling in every limb I raise my loud importunate cry,  
And in a sacred terror wait the Delian<sup>7</sup> God's reply.

Apollo chase the God of Death that leads no shouting  
men,  
Bears no rattling shield and yet consumes this form with pain.  
Famine takes what the plague spares, and all the crops are  
lost;  
No new life fills the empty place—ghost flits after ghost  
To that God-trodden western shore, as flit benighted birds.  
Sorrow speaks to sorrow, but no comfort finds in words.

Hurry him from the land of Thebes with a fair wind behind  
Out onto that formless deep where not a man can find  
Hold for an anchor-fluke, for all is world-enfolding sea;  
Master of the thunder-cloud,<sup>8</sup> set the lightning free,  
And add the thunder-stone to that and fling them on his head,  
For death is all the fashion now, till even Death be dead.

We call against the pallid face of this God-hated God  
The springing heel of Artemis in the hunting sandal shod,  
The tousel-headed Maenads,<sup>9</sup> blown torch and drunken sound,  
The stately Lysian king<sup>10</sup> himself with golden fillet crowned,  
And in his hands the golden bow and the stretched golden  
string,

And Bacchus' wine-ensanguined face that all the Maenads sing.

OEDIP. You are praying, and it may be that your prayer will be answered; that if you hear my words and do my bidding you may find help out of all your trouble. This is my proclamation, children of Cadmus. Whoever among you knows by what man

5. the oracle at Delphi.

6. His son Apollo was his spokesman.

7. Apollo, born on the island of Delos.

8. Zeus.

9. nymphs or female human votaries of the god Dionysus (Bacchus), who celebrated the god with wild ceremonies.

10. i.e., Lycean. The Lycean king is Apollo. The adjective refers to Apollo's functions as wolf slayer.

Laius, son of Labdacus, was killed, must tell all he knows. If he fear for himself and being guilty denounce himself, he shall be in the less danger, suffering no worse thing than banishment. If on the other hand there be one that knows that a foreigner did the deed, let him speak, and I shall give him a reward and my thanks: but if any man keep silent from fear or to screen a friend, hear all what I will do to that man. No one in this land shall speak to him, nor offer sacrifice beside him; but he shall be driven from their homes as if he himself had done the deed. And in this I am the ally of the Pythian God and of the murdered man, and I pray that the murderer's life may, should he be so hidden and screened, drop from him and perish away, whoever he may be, whether he did the deed with others or by himself alone: and on you I lay it to make—so far as man may—these words good, for my sake, and for the God's sake, and for the sake of this land. And even if the God had not spurred us to it, it were a wrong to leave the guilt unpurged, when one so noble, and he your King, had perished; and all have sinned that could have searched it out and did not: and now since it is I who hold the power which he held once, and have his wife for wife—she who would have borne him heirs had he but lived—I take up this cause even as I would were it that of my own father. And if there be any who do not obey me in it, I pray that the Gods send them neither harvest of the earth nor fruit of the womb; but let them be wasted by this plague, or by one more dreadful still. But may all be blessed for ever who hear my words and do my will!

CHOR. We do not know the murderer, and it were indeed more fitting that Phoebus, who laid the task upon us, should name the man.

OEDIP. No man can make the Gods speak against their will.

CHOR. Then I will say what seems the next best thing.

OEDIP. If there is a third course, show it.<sup>11</sup>

CHOR. I know that our lord Tiresias is the seer most like to our lord Phoebus, and through him we may unravel all.

OEDIP. So I was advised by Creon, and twice already have I sent to bring him.

CHOR. If we lack his help we have nothing but vague and ancient rumors.

OEDIP. What rumors are they? I would examine every story.

CHOR. Certain wayfarers were said to have killed the King.

OEDIP. I know, I know. But who was there that saw it?

CHOR. If there is such a man, and terror can move him, he will not keep silence when they have told him of your curses.

11. If there . . . show it: Say what then make any other suggestion you seems to you the next best thing and may have.

OEDIP. He that such a deed did not terrify will not be terrified because of a word.

CHOR. But there is one who shall convict him. For the blind prophet comes at last—in whom alone of all men the truth lives.

[Enter TIRESIAS, led by a boy.]

OEDIP. Tiresias, master of all knowledge, whatever may be spoken, whatever is unspeakable, whatever omens of earth and sky reveal, the plague is among us, and from that plague, Great Prophet, protect us and save us. Phoebus in answer to our question says that it will not leave us till we have found the murderers of Laius, and driven them into exile or put them to death. Do you therefore neglect neither the voice of birds, nor any other sort of wisdom, but rescue yourself, rescue the State, rescue me, rescue all that are defiled by the deed. For we are in your hands, and what greater task falls to a man than to help other men with all he knows and has?

TIRESIAS. Aye, and what worse task than to be wise and suffer for it? I know this well; it slipped out of mind, or I would never have come.

OEDIP. What now?

TIR. Let me go home. You will bear your burden to the end more easily, and I bear mine—if you but give me leave for that.

OEDIP. Your words are strange and unkind to the State that bred you.

TIR. I see that you, on your part, keep your lips tight shut, and therefore I have shut mine that I may come to no misfortune.

OEDIP. For God's love do not turn away—if you have knowledge. We suppliants implore you on our knees.

TIR. You are fools—I will bring misfortune neither upon you nor upon myself.

OEDIP. What is this? You know all and will say nothing? You are minded to betray me and Thebes?

TIR. Why do you ask these things? You will not learn them from me.

OEDIP. What! Basest of the base! You would enrage the very stones. Will you never speak out? Cannot anything touch you?

TIR. The future will come of itself though I keep silent.

OEDIP. Then seeing that come it must, you had best speak out.

TIR. I will speak no further. Rage if you have a mind to; bring out all the fierceness that is in your heart.

OEDIP. That will I. I will not spare to speak my thoughts. Listen to what I have to say. It seems to me that you have helped to plot the deed; and, short of doing it with your own hands, have done the deed yourself. Had you eyesight I would declare that you alone had done it.

**TIR.** So that is what you say? I charge you to obey the decree that you yourself have made, and from this day out to speak neither to these nor to me. You are the defiler of this land.

**OEDIP.** So brazen in your impudence? How do you hope to escape punishment?

**TIR.** I have escaped; my strength is in my truth.

**OEDIP.** Who taught you this? You never got it by your art.

**TIR.** You, because you have spurred me to speech against my will.

**OEDIP.** What speech? Speak it again that I may learn it better.

**TIR.** You are but tempting me—you understood me well enough.

**OEDIP.** No; not so that I can say I know it; speak it again.

**TIR.** I say that you are yourself the murderer that you seek.

**OEDIP.** You shall rue it for having spoken twice such outrageous words.

**TIR.** Would you that I say more that you may be still angrier?

**OEDIP.** Say what you will. I will not let it move me.

**TIR.** I say that you are living with your next of kin in unimagined shame.

**OEDIP.** Do you think you can say such things and never smart for it?

**TIR.** Yes, if there be strength in truth.

**OEDIP.** There is; yes—for everyone but you. But not for you that are maimed in ear and in eye and in wit.

**TIR.** You are but a poor wretch flinging taunts that in a little while everyone shall fling at you.

**OEDIP.** Night, endless night has covered you up so that you can neither hurt me nor any man that looks upon the sun.

**TIR.** Your doom is not to fall by me. Apollo is enough: it is his business to work out your doom.

**OEDIP.** Was it Creon that planned this or you yourself?

**TIR.** Creon is not your enemy; you are your own enemy.

**OEDIP.** Power, ability, position, you bear all burdens, and yet what envy you create! Great must that envy be if envy of my power in this town—a power put into my hands unsought—has made trusty Creon, my old friend Creon, secretly long to take that power from me; if he has suborned this scheming juggler, this quack and trickster, this man with eyes for his gains and blindness in his art. Come, come, where did you prove yourself a seer? Why did you say nothing to set the townsmen free when the riddling Sphinx was here? Yet that riddle was not for the first-comer to read; it needed the skill of a seer. And none such had you! Neither found by help of birds, nor straight from any god. No, I came; I silenced her, I the ignorant Oedipus, it was I that found the answer in my mother-wit, untaught by any birds. And it is I that you would pluck out of my place, thinking to stand close to Creon's throne. But you and the plotter of all this shall mourn despite your zeal

to purge the land. Were you not an old man, you had already learnt how bold you are and learnt it to your cost.

CHOR. Both this man's words and yours, Oedipus, have been said in anger. Such words cannot help us here, nor any but those that teach us to obey the oracle.

TIR. King though you are, the right to answer when attacked belongs to both alike. I am not subject to you, but to Loxias;<sup>12</sup> and therefore I shall never be Creon's subject. And I tell you, since you have taunted me with blindness, that though you have your sight, you cannot see in what misery you stand, nor where you are living, nor with whom, unknowing what you do—for you do not know the stock you come of—you have been your own kin's enemy be they living or be they dead. And one day a mother's curse and father's curse alike shall drive you from this land in dreadful haste with darkness upon those eyes. Therefore, heap your scorn on Creon and on my message if you have a mind to; for no one of living men shall be crushed as you shall be crushed.

OEDIP. Begone this instant! Away, away! Get you from these doors!

TIR. I had never come but that you sent for me.

OEDIP. I did not know you were mad.

TIR. I may seem mad to you, but your parents thought me sane.

OEDIP. My parents! Stop! Who was my father?

TIR. This day shall you know your birth; and it will ruin you.

OEDIP. What dark words you always speak!

TIR. But are you not most skillful in the unravelling of dark words?

OEDIP. You mock me for that which made me great?

TIR. It was that fortune that undid you.

OEDIP. What do I care? For I delivered all this town.

TIR. Then I will go: boy, lead me out of this.

OEDIP. Yes, let him lead you. You take vexation with you.

TIR. I will go: but first I will do my errand. For frown though you may you cannot destroy me. The man for whom you look, the man you have been threatening in all the proclamations about the death of Laius, that man is here. He seems, so far as looks go, an alien; yet he shall be found a native Theban and shall nowise be glad of that fortune. A blind man, though now he has his sight; a beggar, though now he is most rich; he shall go forth feeling the ground before him with his stick; so you go in and think on that, and if you find I am in fault say that I have no skill in prophecy.

[TIRESIAS is led out by the boy. OEDIPUS enters the palace.]

CHOR. The Delphian rock has spoken out, now must a wicked mind, Planner of things I dare not speak and of this bloody wrack, Pray for feet that are as fast as the four hoofs of the wind:

Cloudy Parnassus<sup>13</sup> and the Fates thunder at his back.

That sacred crossing-place of lines upon Parnassus' head,  
Lines that have run through North and South, and run through  
West and East,

That navel of the world<sup>14</sup> bids all men search the mountain  
wood,

The solitary cavern, till they have found that infamous beast.

[CREON enters from the house.]

CREON. Fellow-citizens, having heard that King Oedipus accuses me of dreadful things, I come in my indignation. Does he think that he has suffered wrong from me in these present troubles, or anything that could lead to wrong, whether in word or deed? How can I live under blame like that? What life would be worth having if by you here, and by my nearest friends, called a traitor through the town?

CHOR. He said it in anger, and not from his heart out.

CREON. He said it was I put up the seer to speak those falsehoods.

CHOR. Such things were said.

CREON. And had he his right mind saying it?

CHOR. I do not know—I do not know what my masters do.

[OEDIPUS enters.]

OEDIP. What brought you here? Have you a face so brazen that you come to my house—you, the proved assassin of its master—the certain robber of my crown? Come, tell me in the face of the gods what cowardice, or folly, did you discover in me that you plotted this? Did you think that I would not see what you were at till you had crept upon me, or seeing it would not ward it off? What madness to seek a throne, having neither friends nor followers!

CREON. Now, listen, hear my answer, and then you may with knowledge judge between us.

OEDIP. You are plausible, but waste words now that I know you.

CREON. Hear what I have to say. I can explain it all.

OEDIP. One thing you will not explain away—that you are my enemy.

CREON. You are a fool to imagine that senseless stubbornness sits well upon you.

OEDIP. And you to imagine that you can wrong a kinsman and escape the penalty.

CREON. That is justly said, I grant you; but what is this wrong that you complain of?

13. the mountain which overlooks Apollo's shrine at Delphi.      stone which was called "the navel" and thought to be the center of the

14. In the shrine at Delphi was a world.



OEDIP. Did you advise, or not, that I should send for that notorious prophet?

CREON. And I am of the same mind still.

OEDIP. How long is it, then, since Laius—

CREON. What, what about him?

OEDIP. Since Laius was killed by an unknown hand?

CREON. That was many years ago.

OEDIP. Was this prophet at his trade in those days?

CREON. Yes; skilled as now and in equal honor.

OEDIP. Did he ever speak of me?

CREON. Never certainly when I was within earshot.

OEDIP. And did you inquire into the murder?

CREON. We did inquire but learnt nothing.

OEDIP. And why did he not tell out his story then?

CREON. I do not know. When I know nothing I say nothing.

OEDIP. This much at least you know and can say out.

CREON. What is that? If I know it I will say it.

OEDIP. That if he had not consulted you he would never have said that it was I who killed Laius.

CREON. You know best what he said; but now, question for question.

OEDIP. Question your fill—I cannot be proved guilty of that blood.

CREON. Answer me then. Are you not married to my sister?

OEDIP. That cannot be denied.

CREON. And do you not rule as she does? And with a like power?

OEDIP. I give her all she asks for.

CREON. And am not I the equal of you both?

OEDIP. Yes: and that is why you are so false a friend.

CREON. Not so; reason this out as I reason it, and first weigh this: who would prefer to lie awake amid terrors rather than to sleep in peace, granting that his power is equal in both cases? Neither I nor any sober-minded man. You give me what I ask and let me do what I want, but were I King I would have to do things I did not want to do. Is not influence and no trouble with it better than any throne, am I such a fool as to hunger after unprofitable honors? Now all are glad to see me, every one wishes me well, all that want a favor from you ask speech of me—finding in that their hope. Why should I give up these things and take those? No wise mind is treacherous. I am no contriver of plots, and if another took to them he would not come to me for help. And in proof of this go to the Pythian Oracle, and ask if I have truly told what the gods said: and after that, if you have found that I have plotted with the Soothsayer, take me and kill me; not by the sentence of one mouth only—but of two mouths, yours and my own. But do not condemn me in a corner, upon

some fancy and without proof. What right have you to declare a good man bad or a bad good? It is as bad a thing to cast off a true friend as it is for a man to cast away his own life—but you will learn these things with certainty when the time comes; for time alone shows a just man; though a day can show a knave.

CHOR. King! He has spoken well, he gives himself time to think; a headlong talker does not know what he is saying.

OEDIP. The plotter is at his work, and I must counterplot headlong, or he will get his ends and I miss mine.

CREON. What will you do then? Drive me from the land?

OEDIP. Not so; I do not desire your banishment—but your death.

CREON. You are not sane.

OEDIP. I am sane at least in my own interest.

CREON. You should be in mine also.

OEDIP. No, for you are false.

CREON. But if you understand nothing?

OEDIP. Yet I must rule.

CREON. Not if you rule badly.

OEDIP. Hear him, O Thebes!

CREON. Thebes is for me also, not for you alone.

CHOR. Cease, princes: I see Jocasta coming out of the house; she comes just in time to quench the quarrel.

[JOCASTA enters.]

JOCASTA. Unhappy men! Why have you made this crazy uproar? Are you not ashamed to quarrel about your own affairs when the whole country is in trouble? Go back into the palace, Oedipus, and you, Creon, to your own house. Stop making all this noise about some petty thing.

CREON. Your husband is about to kill me—or to drive me from the land of my fathers.

OEDIP. Yes: for I have convicted him of treachery against me.

CREON. Now may I perish accursed if I have done such a thing!

JOCAS. For God's love believe it, Oedipus. First, for the sake of his oath, and then for my sake, and for the sake of these people here.

CHOR. [All] King, do what she asks.

OEDIP. What would you have me do?

CHOR. Not to make a dishonorable charge, with no more evidence than rumor, against a friend who has bound himself with an oath.

OEDIP. Do you desire my exile or my death?

CHOR. No, by Helios,<sup>15</sup> by the first of all the gods, may I die abandoned by Heaven and earth if I have that thought! What breaks my heart is that our public griefs should be increased by your quarrels.

OEDIP. Then let him go, though I am doomed thereby to death or to

be thrust dishonored from the land; it is your lips, not his, that move me to compassion; wherever he goes my hatred follows him.  
 CREON. You are as sullen in yielding as you were vehement in anger, but such natures are their own heaviest burden.

OEDIP. Why will you not leave me in peace and begone?

CREON. I will go away; what is your hatred to me? In the eyes of all here I am a just man.

[*He goes.*]

CHOR. Lady, why do you not take your man in to the house?

JOCAS. I will do so when I have learnt what has happened.

CHOR. The half of it was blind suspicion bred of talk; the rest the wounds left by injustice.

JOCAS. It was on both sides?

CHOR. Yes.

JOCAS. What was it?

CHOR. Our land is vexed enough. Let the thing alone now that it is over.

[*Exit leader of CHORUS.*]

JOCAS. In the name of the gods, King, what put you in this anger?

OEDIP. I will tell you; for I honor you more than these men do. The cause is Creon and his plots against me.

JOCAS. Speak on, if you can tell clearly how this quarrel arose.

OEDIP. He says that I am guilty of the blood of Laius.

JOCAS. On his own knowledge, or on hearsay?

OEDIP. He has made a rascal of a seer his mouthpiece.

JOCAS. Do not fear that there is truth in what he says. Listen to me, and learn to your comfort that nothing born of woman can know what is to come. I will give you proof of that. An oracle came to Laius once, I will not say from Phoebus, but from his ministers, that he was doomed to die by the hand of his own child sprung from him and me. When his child was but three days old, Laius bound its feet together and had it thrown by sure hands upon a trackless mountain; and when Laius was murdered at the place where three highways meet, it was, or so at least the rumor says, by foreign robbers. So Apollo did not bring it about that the child should kill its father, nor did Laius die in the dreadful way he feared by his child's hand. Yet that was how the message of the seers mapped out the future. Pay no attention to such things. What the God would show he will need no help to show it, but bring it to light himself.

OEDIP. What restlessness of soul, lady, has come upon me since I heard you speak, what a tumult of the mind!

JOCAS. What is this new anxiety? What has startled you?

OEDIP. You said that Laius was killed where three highways meet.

JOCAS. Yes: that was the story.

OEDIP. And where is the place?

JOCAS. In Phocis where the road divides branching off to Delphi and to Daulis.

OEDIP. And when did it happen? How many years ago?

JOCAS. News was published in this town just before you came into power.

OEDIPUS. O Zeus! What have you planned to do unto me?<sup>16</sup>

JOCAS. He was tall; the silver had just come into his hair; and in shape not greatly unlike to you.

OEDIP. Unhappy that I am! It seems that I have laid a dreadful curse upon myself, and did not know it.

JOCAS. What do you say? I tremble when I look on you, my King.

OEDIP. And I have a misgiving that the seer can see indeed. But I will know it all more clearly, if you tell me one thing more.

JOCAS. Indeed, though I tremble I will answer whatever you ask.

OEDIP. Had he but a small troop with him; or did he travel like a great man with many followers?

JOCAS. There were but five in all—one of them a herald; and there was one carriage with Laius in it.

OEDIP. Alas! It is now clear indeed. Who was it brought the news, lady?

JOCAS. A servant—the one survivor.

OEDIP. Is he by chance in the house now?

JOCAS. No; for when he found you reigning instead of Laius he besought me, his hand clasped in mine, to send him to the fields among the cattle that he might be far from the sight of this town; and I sent him. He was a worthy man for a slave and might have asked a bigger thing.

OEDIP. I would have him return to us without delay.

JOCAS. Oedipus, it is easy. But why do you ask this?

OEDIP. I fear that I have said too much, and therefore I would question him.

JOCAS. He shall come, but I too have a right to know what lies so heavy upon your heart, my King.

OEDIP. Yes: and it shall not be kept from you now that my fear has grown so heavy. Nobody is more to me than you, nobody has the same right to learn my good or evil luck. My father was Polybus of Corinth, my mother the Dorian Merope, and I was held the foremost man in all that town until a thing happened—a thing to startle a man, though not to make him angry as it made me.

We were sitting at the table, and a man who had drunk too much 'cried out that I was not my father's son—and I, though angry, re-

16. This is followed by two lines which Yeats has omitted: JOCAS. What is this thing which weighs on your soul? OEDIP. Don't ask me any more questions, but tell me what Laius looked like and how old he was.

strained my anger for that day; but the next day went to my father and my mother and questioned them. They were indignant at the taunt and that comforted me—and yet the man's words rankled, for they had spread a rumor through the town. Without consulting my father or my mother I went to Delphi, but Phoebus told me nothing of the thing for which I came, but much of other things—things of sorrow and of terror: that I should live in incest with my mother, and beget a brood that men would shudder to look upon; that I should be my father's murderer. Hearing those words I fled out of Corinth, and from that day have but known where it lies when I have found its direction by the stars. I sought where I might escape those infamous things—the doom that was laid upon me. I came in my flight to that very spot where you tell me this king perished. Now, lady, I will tell you the truth. When I had come close up to those three roads, I came upon a herald, and a man like him you have described seated in a carriage. The man who held the reins and the old man himself would not give me room, but thought to force me from the path, and I struck the driver in my anger. The old man, seeing what I had done, waited till I was passing him and then struck me upon the head. I paid him back in full, for I knocked him out of the carriage with a blow of my stick. He rolled on his back, and after that I killed them all. If this stranger were indeed Laius, is there a more miserable man in the world than the man before you? Is there a man more hated of Heaven? No stranger, no citizen, may receive him into his house, not a soul may speak to him, and no mouth but my own mouth has laid this curse upon me. Am I not wretched? May I be swept from this world before I have endured this doom!

CHOR. These things, O King, fill us with terror; yet hope till you speak with him that saw the deed, and have learnt all.

OEDIP. Till I have learnt all, I may hope. I await the man that is coming from the pastures.

JOCAS. What is it that you hope to learn?

OEDIP. I will tell you. If his tale agrees with yours, then I am clear.

JOCAS. What tale of mine?

OEDIP. He told you that Laius met his death from robbers; if he keeps to that tale now and speaks of several slayers, I am not the slayer. But if he says one lonely wayfarer, then beyond a doubt the scale dips to me.

JOCAS. Be certain of this much at least, his first tale was of robbers. He cannot revoke that tale—the city heard it and not I alone. Yet, if he should somewhat change his story, King, at least he cannot make the murder of Laius square with prophecy; for

Loxias plainly said of Laius that he would die by the hand of my child. That poor innocent did not kill him, for it died before him. Therefore from this out I would not, for all divination can do, so much as look to my right hand or to my left hand, or fear at all.

OEDIP. You have judged well; and yet for all that, send and bring this peasant to me.

JOCAS. I will send without delay. I will do all that you would have of me—but let us come in to the house.

[*They go into the house.*]

CHOR. For this one thing above all I would be praised as a man,  
That in my words and my deeds I have kept those laws in mind  
Olympian Zeus, and that high clear Empyrean,<sup>17</sup>  
Fashioned, and not some man or people of mankind,  
Even those sacred laws nor age nor sleep can blind.

A man becomes a tyrant out of insolence,  
He climbs and climbs, until all people call him great,  
He seems upon the summit, and God flings him thence;  
Yet an ambitious man may lift up a whole State,  
And in his death be blessed, in his life fortunate.

And all men honor such; but should a man forget  
The holy images, the Delphian Sibyl's trance,<sup>18</sup>  
And the world's navel-stone, and not be punished for it  
And seem most fortunate, or even blessed perchance,  
Why should we honor the gods, or join the sacred dance?

[*JOCASTA enters from the palace.*]

JOCAS. It has come into my head, citizens of Thebes, to visit every altar of the Gods, a wreath in my hand and a dish of incense. For all manner of alarms trouble the soul of Oedipus, who instead of weighing new oracles by old, like a man of sense, is at the mercy of every mouth that speaks terror. Seeing that my words are nothing to him, I cry to you, Lycian Apollo,<sup>19</sup> whose altar is the first I meet: I come, a suppliant, bearing symbols of prayer; O, make us clean, for now we are all afraid, seeing him afraid, even as they who see the helmsman afraid.

[*Enter MESSENGER.*]

MESSENGER. May I learn from you, strangers, where is the home of King Oedipus? Or better still, tell me where he himself is, if you know.

17. the upper air, where the gods lived.

18. Yeats follows late authorities in supposing that the Delphic priestess

(Sibyl) delivered her oracle in a trance or frenzy. There is no reference to this in Sophocles' words.

19. i.e., Lycean (see footnote 10).

CHOR. This is his house, and he himself, stranger, is within it,  
and this lady is the mother of his children.

MESS. Then I call a blessing upon her, seeing what man she has  
married.

JOCAS. May God reward those words with a like blessing, stranger!

But what have you come to seek or to tell?

MESS. Good news for your house, Lady, and for your husband.

JOCAS. What news? From whence have you come?

MESS. From Corinth, and you will rejoice at the message I am about  
to give you; yet, maybe, it will grieve you.

JOCAS. What is it? How can it have this double power?

MESS. The people of Corinth, they say, will take him for king.

JOCAS. How then? Is old Polybus no longer on the throne?

MESS. No. He is in his tomb.

JOCAS. What do you say? Is Polybus dead, old man?

MESS. May I drop dead if it is not the truth.

JOCAS. Away! Hurry to your master with this news. O oracle of the  
Gods, where are you now? This is the man whom Oedipus feared  
and shunned lest he should murder him, and now this man has  
died a natural death, and not by the hand of Oedipus.

[Enter OEDIPUS.]

OEDIP. Jocasta, dearest wife, why have you called me from the house?

JOCAS. Listen to this man, and judge to what the oracles of the Gods  
have come.

OEDIP. And he—who may he be? And what news has he?

JOCAS. He has come from Corinth to tell you that your father,  
Polybus, is dead.

OEDIP. How, stranger? Let me have it from your own mouth.

MESS. If I am to tell the story, the first thing is that he is dead and  
gone.

OEDIP. By some sickness or by treachery?

MESS. A little thing can bring the aged to their rest.

OEDIP. Ah! He died, it seems, from sickness?

MESS. Yes; and of old age.

OEDIP. Alas! Alas! Why, indeed, my wife, should one look to that  
Pythian seer, or to the birds that scream above our heads? For  
they would have it that I was doomed to kill my father. And  
now he is dead—hid already beneath the earth. And here am  
I—who had no part in it, unless indeed he died from longing  
for me. If that were so, I may have caused his death; but Polybus  
has carried the oracles with him into Hades—the oracles as men  
have understood them—and they are worth nothing.

JOCAS. Did I not tell you so, long since?

OEDIP. You did, but fear misled me.

JOCAS. Put this trouble from you.<sup>20</sup>

OEDIP. Those bold words would sound better, were not my mother living. But as it is—I have some grounds for fear; yet you have said well.

JOCAS. Yet your father's death is a sign that all is well.

OEDIP. I know that: but I fear because of her who lives.

MESS. Who is this woman who makes you afraid?

OEDIP. Merope, old man, the wife of Polybus.

MESS. What is there in her to make you afraid?

OEDIP. A dreadful oracle sent from Heaven, stranger.

MESS. Is it a secret, or can you speak it out?

OEDIP. Loxias said that I was doomed to marry my own mother, and to shed my father's blood. For that reason I fled from my house in Corinth; and I did right, though there is great comfort in familiar faces.

MESS. Was it indeed for that reason that you went into exile?

OEDIP. I did not wish, old man, to shed my father's blood.

MESS. King, have I not freed you from that fear?

OEDIP. You shall be fittingly rewarded.

MESS. Indeed, to tell the truth, it was for that I came; to bring you home and be the better for it—

OEDIP. No! I will never go to my parents' home.

MESS. Ah, my son, it is plain enough, you do not know what you do.

OEDIP. How, old man? For God's love, tell me.

MESS. If for these reasons you shrink from going home.

OEDIP. I am afraid lest Phoebus has spoken true.

MESS. You are afraid of being made guilty through Merope?

OEDIP. That is my constant fear.

MESS. A vain fear.

OEDIP. How so, if I was born of that father and mother?

MESS. Because they were nothing to you in blood.

OEDIP. What do you say? Was Polybus not my father?

MESS. No more nor less than myself.

OEDIP. How can my father be no more to me than you who are nothing to me?

MESS. He did not beget you any more than I.

OEDIP. No? Then why did he call me his son?

MESS. He took you as a gift from these hands of mine.

OEDIP. How could he love so dearly what came from another's hands?

MESS. He had been childless.

20. Some very important lines have been omitted: OEDIP. But how can I avoid fearing marriage with my mother? JOCAS. What should man fear, man for whom Chance is lord, and no clear foresight possible? It is best to live hap-

hazard, as best one can. Have no fear about marriage with your mother. Many a man before this has slept with his mother in his dreams. All this must be disregarded if one is to lead an easy life.



OEDIP. If I am not your son, where did you get me?

MESS. In a wooded valley of Cithaeron.<sup>21</sup>

OEDIP. What brought you wandering there?

MESS. I was in charge of mountain sheep.

OEDIP. A shepherd—a wandering, hired man.

MESS. A hired man who came just in time.

OEDIP. Just in time—had it come to that?

MESS. Have not the cords left their marks upon your ankles?

OEDIP. Yes, that is an old trouble.

MESS. I took your feet out of the spangle.<sup>22</sup>

OEDIP. I have had those marks from the cradle.

MESS. They have given you the name you bear.<sup>23</sup>

OEDIP. Tell me, for God's sake, was that deed my mother's or my father's?

MESS. I do not know—he who gave you to me knows more of that than I.

OEDIP. What? You had me from another? You did not chance on me yourself?

MESS. No. Another shepherd gave you to me.

OEDIP. Who was he? Can you tell me who he was?

MESS. I think that he was said to be of Laius' household.

OEDIP. The king who ruled this country long ago?

MESS. The same—the man was herdsman in his service.

OEDIP. Is he alive, that I might speak with him?

MESS. You people of this country should know that.

OEDIP. Is there any one here present who knows the herd he speaks of? Any one who has seen him in the town pastures? The hour has come when all must be made clear.

CHOR. I think he is the very herd<sup>24</sup> you sent for but now; Jocasta can tell you better than I.

JOCAS. Why ask about that man? Why think about him? Why waste a thought on what this man has said? What he has said is of no account.

OEDIP. What, with a clue like that in my hands and fail to find out my birth?

JOCAS. For God's sake, if you set any value upon your life, give up this search—my misery is enough.

OEDIP. Though I be proved the son of a slave, yes, even of three generations of slaves, you cannot be made base-born.

JOCAS. Yet, hear me, I implore you. Give up this search.

OEDIP. I will not hear of anything but searching the whole thing out.

JOCAS. I am only thinking of your good—I have advised you for the best.

21. a mountain on the frontiers of Theban and Corinthian territory.

22. a rope fetter put round an ani-

mal's foot.

23. *Oedipus* means "swell-foot."

24. herdsman.

OEDIP. Your advice makes me impatient.

JOCAS. May you never come to know who you are, unhappy man!

OEDIP. Go, some one, bring the herdsman here—and let that woman glory in her noble blood.

JOCAS. Alas, alas, miserable man! Miserable! That is all that I can call you now or for ever.

[*She goes out.*]

CHOR. Why has the lady gone, Oedipus, in such a transport of despair? Out of this silence will burst a storm of sorrows.

OEDIP. Let come what will. However lowly my origin I will discover it. That woman, with all a woman's pride, grows red with shame at my base birth. I think myself the child of Good Luck, and that the years are my foster-brothers. Sometimes they have set me up, and sometimes thrown me down, but he that has Good Luck for mother can suffer no dishonor. That is my origin, nothing can change it, so why should I renounce this search into my birth?

CHOR. Oedipus' nurse, mountain of many a hidden glen,  
Be honored among men;  
A famous man, deep-thoughted, and his body strong;  
Be honored in dance and song.  
Who met in the hidden glen? Who let his fancy run  
Upon nymph of Helicon?<sup>25</sup>  
Lord Pan or Lord Apollo or the mountain lord  
By the Bacchantes adored?

OEDIP. If I, who have never met the man, may venture to say so, I think that the herdsman we await approaches; his venerable age matches with this stranger's, and I recognize as servants of mine those who bring him. But you, if you have seen the man before, will know the man better than I.

CHOR. Yes, I know the man who is coming; he was indeed in Laius' service, and is still the most trusted of the herdsmen.

OEDIP. I ask you first, Corinthian stranger, is this the man you mean?

MESS. He is the very man.

OEDIP. Look at me, old man! Answer my questions. Were you once in Laius' service?

HERDSMAN. I was: not a bought slave, but reared up in the house.

OEDIP. What was your work—your manner of life?

HERD. For the best part of my life I have tended flocks.

OEDIP. Where, mainly?

HERD. Cithaeron or its neighborhood.

OEDIP. Do you remember meeting with this man there?

HERD. What man do you mean?

25. a mountain near Thebes. The chorus is suggesting that Oedipus may turn out to be the son of a nymph and a god.

OEDIP. This man. Did you ever meet him?

HERD. I cannot recall him to mind.

MESS. No wonder in that, master; but I will bring back his memory.

He and I lived side by side upon Cithaeron. I had but one flock and he had two. Three full half-years we lived there, from spring to autumn, and every winter I drove my flock to my own fold, while he drove his to the fold of Laius. Is that right? Was it not so?

HERD. True enough; though it was long ago.

MESS. Come, tell me now—do you remember giving me a boy to rear as my own foster-son?

HERD. What are you saying? Why do you ask me that?

MESS. Look at that man, my friend, he is the child you gave me.

HERD. A plague upon you! Cannot you hold your tongue?

OEDIP. Do not blame him, old man; your own words are more blamable.

HERD. And how have I offended, master?

OEDIP. In not telling of that boy he asks of.

HERD. He speaks from ignorance, and does not know what he is saying.

OEDIP. If you will not speak with a good grace you shall be made to speak.

HERD. Do not hurt me for the love of God, I am an old man.

OEDIP. Some one there, tie his hands behind his back.

HERD. Alas! Wherefore! What more would you learn?

OEDIP. Did you give this man the child he speaks of?

HERD. I did: would I had died that day!

OEDIP. Well, you may come to that unless you speak the truth.

HERD. Much more am I lost if I speak it.

OEDIP. What! Would the fellow make more delay?

HERD. No, no. I said before that I gave it to him.

OEDIP. Where did you come by it? Your own child, or another?

HERD. It was not my own child—I had it from another.

OEDIP. From any of those here? From what house?

HERD. Do not ask any more, master; for the love of God do not ask.

OEDIP. You are lost if I have to question you again.

HERD. It was a child from the house of Laius.

OEDIP. A slave? Or one of his own race?

HERD. Alas! I am on the edge of dreadful words.

OEDIP. And I of hearing: yet hear I must.

HERD. It was said to have been his own child. But your lady within can tell you of these things best.

OEDIP. How? It was she who gave it to you?

HERD. Yes, King.

OEDIP. To what end?

HERD. That I should make away with it.

OEDIP. Her own child?

HERD. Ycs: from fear of evil prophecies.

OEDIP. What prophecies?

HERD. That he should kill his father.

OEDIP. Why, then, did you give him up to this old man?

HERD. Through pity, master, believing that he would carry him to whatever land he had himself come from—but he saved him for dreadful misery; for if you are what this man says, you are the most miserable of all men.

OEDIP. O! O! All brought to pass! All truth! Now O light, may I look my last upon you, having been found accursed in bloodshed, accursed in marriage, and in my coming into the world accursed!  
[*He rushes into the palace.*]

CHOR. What can the shadow-like generations of man attain  
But build up a dazzling mockery of delight that under their  
touch dissolves again?  
Oedipus seemed blessed, but there is no man blessed amongst  
men.

Oedipus overcame the woman-breasted Fate;<sup>26</sup>

He seemed like a strong tower against Death and first among  
the fortunate;

He sat upon the ancient throne of Thebes, and all men called  
him great.

But, looking for a marriage-bed, he found the bed of his birth,  
Tilled the field his father had tilled, cast seed into the same  
abounding earth;

Entered through the door that had sent him wailing forth.

Begetter and begot as one! How could that be hid?

What darkness cover up that marriage-bed? Time watches, he is  
eagle-eyed,

And all the works of man are known and every soul is tried.

Would you had never come to Thebes, nor to this house,  
Nor riddled with the woman-breasted Fate, beaten off Death and  
succored us,

That I had never raised this song, heartbroken Oedipus!

[*SECOND MESSENGER coming from the house.*]

SECOND MESSENGER. Friends and kinsmen of this house! What  
deeds must you look upon, what burden of sorrow bear, if true  
to race you still love the House of Labdacus. For not Ister<sup>27</sup> nor  
Phasis<sup>28</sup> could wash this house clean, so many misfortunes have

26. the Sphinx.

27. the Danube.

28. a big river in Asia Minor.

been brought upon it, so many has it brought upon itself, and those misfortunes are always the worst that a man brings upon himself.

CHOR. Great already are the misfortunes of this house, and you bring us a new tale.

2ND MESS. A short tale in the telling: Jocasta, our Queen, is dead.

CHOR. Alas, miserable woman, how did she die?

2ND MESS. By her own hand. It cannot be as terrible to you as to one that saw it with his eyes, yet so far as words can serve, you shall see it. When she had come into the vestibule, she ran half crazed towards her marriage-bed, clutching at her hair with the fingers of both hands, and once within the chamber dashed the doors together behind her. Then called upon the name of Laius, long since dead, remembering that son who killed the father and upon the mother begot an accursed race. And wailed because of that marriage wherein she had borne a twofold race—husband by husband, children by her child. Then Oedipus with a shriek burst in and running here and there asked for a sword, asked where he would find the wife that was no wife but a mother who had borne his children and himself. Nobody answered him, we all stood dumb; but supernatural power helped him, for, with a dreadful shriek, as though beckoned, he sprang at the double doors, drove them in, burst the bolts out of their sockets, and ran into the room. There we saw the woman hanging in a swinging halter, and with a terrible cry he loosened the halter from her neck. When that unhappiest woman lay stretched upon the ground, we saw another dreadful sight. He dragged the golden brooches from her dress and lifting them struck them upon his eyeballs, crying out, 'You have looked enough upon those you ought never to have looked upon, failed long enough to know those that you should have known; henceforth you shall be dark.' He struck his eyes, not once, but many times, lifting his hands and speaking such or like words. The blood poured down and not with a few slow drops, but all at once over his beard in a dark shower as it were hail.

[*The CHORUS wails and he steps further on to the stage.*]

Such evils have come forth from the deeds of those two and fallen not on one alone but upon husband and wife. They inherited much happiness, much good fortune; but today, ruin, shame, death, and loud crying, all evils that can be counted up, all, all are theirs.

CHOR. Is he any quieter?

2ND MESS. He cries for some one to unbar the gates and to show to all the men of Thebes his father's murderer, his mother's—the unholy word must not be spoken. It is his purpose to cast himself

out of the land that he may not bring all this house under his curse. But he has not the strength to do it. He must be supported and led away. The curtain is parting; you are going to look upon a sight which even those who shudder must pity.

[*Enter OEDIPUS.*]

OEDIP. Woe, woe, is me! Miserable, miserable that I am? Where am I? Where am I going? Where am I cast away? Who hears my words?

CHOR. Cast away indeed, dreadful to the sight of the eye, dreadful to the ear.

OEDIP. Ah, friend, the only friend left to me, friend still faithful to the blind man! I know that you are there; blind though I am, I recognize your voice.

CHOR. Where did you get the courage to put out your eyes? What unearthly power drove you to that?

OEDIP. Apollo, friends, Apollo, but it was my own hand alone, wretched that I am, that quenched these eyes.

CHOR. You were better dead than blind.

OEDIP. No, it is better to be blind. What sight is there that could give me joy? How could I have looked into the face of my father when I came among the dead, aye, or on my miserable mother, since against them both I sinned such things that no halter can punish? And what to me this spectacle, town, statue, wall, and what to me this people, since I, thrice wretched, I, noblest of Theban men, have doomed myself to banishment, doomed myself when I commanded all to thrust out the unclean thing?

CHOR. It had indeed been better if that herdsman had never taken your feet out of the spangle or brought you back to life.

OEDIP. O three roads, O secret glen; O coppice and narrow way where three roads met; you that drank up the blood I spilt, the blood that was my own, my father's blood: remember what deeds I wrought for you to look upon, and then, when I had come hither, the new deeds that I wrought. O marriage-bed that gave me birth and after that gave children to your child, creating an incestuous kindred of fathers, brothers, sons, wives, and mothers. Yes, all the shame and the uncleanness that I have wrought among men.

CHOR. For all my pity I shudder and turn away.

OEDIP. Come near, condescend to lay your hands upon a wretched man; listen, do not fear. My plague can touch no man but me. Hide me somewhere out of this land for God's sake, or kill me, or throw me into the sea where you shall never look upon me more.

[*Enter CREON and attendants.*]

CHOR. Here Creon comes at a fit moment; you can ask of him what

you will, help or counsel, for he is now in your place. He is King.  
**OEDIP.** What can I say to him? What can I claim, having been altogether unjust to him?

**CREON.** I have not come in mockery, Oedipus, nor to reproach you. Lead him in to the house as quickly as you can. Do not let him display his misery before strangers.

**OEDIP.** I must obey, but first, since you have come in so noble a spirit, you will hear me.

**CREON.** Say what you will.

**OEDIP.** I know that you will give her that lies within such a tomb as befits your own blood, but there is something more, Creon. My sons are men and can take care of themselves, but my daughters, my two unhappy daughters, that have ever eaten at my own table and shared my food, watch over my daughters, Creon. If it is lawful, let me touch them with my hands. Grant it, Prince, grant it, noble heart. I would believe, could I touch them, that I still saw them.

[*ISMENE and ANTIGONE are led in by attendants.*]

But do I hear them sobbing? Has Creon pitied me and sent my children, my darlings? Has he done this?

**CREON.** Yes, I ordered it, for I know how greatly you have always loved them.

**OEDIP.** Then may you be blessed, and may Heaven be kinder to you than it has been to me! My children, where are you? Come hither—hither—come to the hands of him whose mother was your mother; the hands that put out your father's eyes, eyes once as bright as your own; his who, understanding nothing, seeing nothing, became your father by her that bore him. I weep when I think of the bitter life that men will make you live, and the days that are to come. Into what company dare you go, to what festival, but that you shall return home from it not sharing in the joys, but bathed in tears? When you are old enough to be married, what man dare face the reproach that must cling to you and to your children? What misery is there lacking? Your father killed his father, he begat you at the spring of his own being, offspring of her that bore him. That is the taunt that would be cast upon you and on the man that you should marry. That man is not alive; my children, you must wither away in barrenness. Ah, son of Menocceus, listen. Seeing that you are the only father now left to them, for we their parents are lost, both of us lost, do not let them wander in beggary—are they not your own kindred?—do not let them sink down into my misery. No, pity them, seeing them utterly wretched in helpless childhood if you do not protect them. Show me that you promise, generous man, by touching me with your hand.

that of looking your circumstances in the face and saving your city, we have done; but if this is your intention we will proceed.

MELIANS. It is an excusable and natural thing that men in our position should have much to say and should indulge in many fancies. But we admit that this conference has met to consider the question of our preservation; and therefore let the argument proceed in the manner which you propose.

ATH. Well, then, we Athenians will use no fine words; we will not go out of our way to prove at length that we have a right to rule, because we overthrew the Persians;<sup>5</sup> or that we attack you now because we are suffering any injury at your hands. We should not convince you if we did; nor must you expect to convince us by arguing that, although a colony of the Lacedaemonians, you have taken no part in their expeditions, or that you have never done us any wrong. But you and we should say what we really think, and aim only at what is possible, for we both alike know that into the discussion of human affairs the question of justice only enters where the pressure of necessity is equal, and that the powerful exact what they can, and the weak grant what they must.

MEL. Well, then, since you set aside justice and invite us to speak of expediency, in our judgment it is certainly expedient that you should respect a principle which is for the common good; and that to every man when in peril a reasonable claim should be accounted a claim of right, and any plea which he is disposed to urge, even if failing of the point a little, should help his cause. Your interest in this principle is quite as great as ours, inasmuch as you, if you fall, will incur the heaviest vengeance, and will be the most terrible example to mankind.

ATH. The fall of our empire, if it should fall, is not an event to which we look forward with dismay; for ruling states such as Lacedaemon are not cruel to their vanquished enemies.<sup>6</sup> And we are fighting not so much against the Lacedaemonians as against our own subjects who may some day rise up and overcome their former masters. But this is a danger which you may leave to us. And we will now endeavor to show that we have come in the interests of our empire, and that in what we are about to say we are only seeking the preservation of your city. For we want to make you ours with the least trouble to ourselves, and it is for the interests of us both that you should not be destroyed.

MEL. It may be your interest to be our masters, but how can it be ours to be your slaves?

5. during the Persian invasion of 480-479 B.C. and during the subsequent offensives against the Persians, which were led by Athens as the most important power in the Delian League.

6. This cynical prophecy turned out to be correct, for after their victory in 404 B.C. the Spartans treated Athens with comparative mildness.



**ATH.** To you the gain will be that by submission you will avert the worst; and we shall be all the richer for your preservation.

**MEL.** But must we be your enemies? Will you not receive us as friends if we are neutral and remain at peace with you?

**ATH.** No, your enmity is not half so mischievous to us as your friendship; for the one is in the eyes of our subjects an argument of our power, the other of our weakness.

**MEL.** But are your subjects really unable to distinguish between states in which you have no concern, and those which are chiefly your own colonies, and in some cases have revolted and been subdued by you?

**ATH.** Why, they do not doubt that both of them have a good deal to say for themselves on the score of justice, but they think that states like yours are left free because they are able to defend themselves, and that we do not attack them because we dare not. So that your subjection will give us an increase of security, as well as an extension of empire. For we are masters of the sea, and you who are islanders, and insignificant islanders too, must not be allowed to escape us.

**MEL.** But do you not recognize another danger? For once more, since you drive us from the plea of justice and press upon us your doctrine of expediency, we must show you what is for our interest, and, if it be for yours also, may hope to convince you:—Will you not be making enemies of all who are now neutrals? When they see how you are treating us they will expect you some day to turn against them; and if so, are you not strengthening the enemies whom you already have, and bringing upon you others who, if they could help, would never dream of being your enemies at all?

**ATH.** We do not consider our really dangerous enemies to be any of the peoples inhabiting the mainland who, secure in their freedom, may defer indefinitely any measures of precaution which they take against us, but islanders who, like you, happen to be under no control, and all who may be already irritated by the necessity of submission to our empire—these are our real enemies, for they are the most reckless and most likely to bring themselves as well as us into a danger which they cannot but foresee.

**MEL.** Surely then, if you and your subjects will brave all this risk, you to preserve your empire and they to be quit of it, how base and cowardly it would be in us, who retain our freedom, not to do and suffer anything rather than be your slaves.

**ATH.** Not so, if you calmly reflect: for you are not fighting against equals to whom you cannot yield without disgrace, but you are taking counsel whether or no you shall resist an overwhelming force. The question is not one of honor but of prudence.

**MEL.** But we know that the fortune of war is sometimes impartial,

and not always on the side of numbers. If we yield now all is over; but if we fight there is yet a hope that we may stand upright.

ATH. Hope is a good comforter in the hour of danger, and when men have something else to depend upon, although hurtful, she is not ruinous. But when her spendthrift nature has induced them to stake their all, they see her as she is in the moment of their fall, and not till then. While the knowledge of her might enable them to be ware of her, she never fails. You are weak and a single turn of the scale might be your ruin. Do not you be thus deluded; avoid the error of which so many are guilty, who, although they might still be saved if they would take the natural means, when visible grounds of confidence forsake them, have recourse to the invisible, to prophecies and oracles and the like, which ruin men by the hopes which they inspire in them.

MEL. We know only too well how hard the struggle must be against your power, and against fortune, if she does not mean to be impartial. Nevertheless we do not despair of fortune; for we hope to stand as high as you in the favor of heaven, because we are righteous, and you against whom we contend are unrighteous; and we are satisfied that our deficiency in power will be compensated by the aid of our allies the Lacedaemonians; they cannot refuse to help us, if only because we are their kinsmen, and for the sake of their own honor. And therefore our confidence is not so utterly blind as you suppose.

ATH. As for the Gods, we expect to have quite as much of their favor as you: for we are not doing or claiming anything which goes beyond common opinion about divine or men's desires about human things. For of the Gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a law of their nature wherever they can rule they will. This law was not made by us, and we are not the first who have acted upon it; we did but inherit it, and shall bequeath it to all time, and we know that you and all mankind, if you were as strong as we are, would do as we do. So much for the Gods; we have told you why we expect to stand as high in their good opinion as you. And then as to the Lacedaemonians—when you imagine that out of very shame they will assist you, we admire the simplicity of your idea, but we do not envy you the folly of it. The Lacedaemonians are exceedingly virtuous among themselves, and according to their national standard of morality. But in respect of their dealings with others, although many things might be said, a word is enough to describe them—of all men whom we know they are the most notorious for identifying what is pleasant with what is honorable, and what is expedient with what is just. But how inconsistent is such a character with your present blind hope of deliverance!

MEL. That is the very reason why we trust them; they will look to

their interest, and therefore will not be willing to betray the Melians, who are their own colonists, lest they should be distrusted by their friends in Hellas<sup>7</sup> and play into the hands of their enemies.

ATH. But do you not see that the path of expediency is safe, whereas justice and honor involve danger in practice, and such dangers the Lacedaemonians seldom care to face?

MEL. On the other hand, we think that whatever perils there may be, they will be ready to face them for our sakes, and will consider danger less dangerous where we are concerned. For if they need our aid we are close at hand, and they can better trust our loyal feeling because we are their kinsmen.

ATH. Yes, but what encourages men who are invited to join in a conflict is clearly not the good-will of those who summon them to their side, but a decided superiority in real power. To this no men look more keenly than the Lacedaemonians; so little confidence have they in their own resources that they only attack their neighbors when they have numerous allies, and therefore they are not likely to find their way by themselves to an island, when we are masters of the sea.

MEL. But they may send their allies: the Cretan sea<sup>8</sup> is a large place; and the masters of the sea will have more difficulty in overtaking vessels which want to escape than the pursued in escaping. If the attempt should fail they may invade Attica itself, and find their way to allies of yours whom Brasidas<sup>9</sup> did not reach; and then you will have to fight, not for the conquest of a land in which you have no concern, but nearer home, for the preservation of your confederacy and of your own territory.

ATH. Help may come from Lacedaemon to you as it has come to others, and should you ever have actual experience of it, then you will know that never once have the Athenians retired from a siege through fear of a foe elsewhere. You told us that the safety of your city would be your first care, but we remark that, in this long discussion, not a word has been uttered by you which would give a reasonable man expectation of deliverance. Your strongest grounds are hopes deferred, and what power you have is not to be compared with that which is already arrayed against you. Unless after we have withdrawn you mean to come, as even now you may, to a wiser conclusion, you are showing a great want of sense. For surely you cannot dream of flying to that false sense of honor which has been the ruin of so many when danger and dishonor were staring them in the face. Many men with their eyes still open to the conse-

7. Greece.

8. Melos lies some seventy miles north of Crete.

9. a Spartan commander who had stirred up a great deal of trouble among the Athenian subjects in the north of Greece earlier in the war.

quences have found the word honor too much for them, and have suffered a mere name to lure them on, until it has drawn upon them real and irretrievable calamities; through their own folly they have incurred a worse dishonor than fortune would have inflicted upon them. If you are wise you will not run this risk; you ought to see that there can be no disgrace in yielding to a great city which invites you to become her ally on reasonable terms, keeping your own land, and merely paying tribute; and that you will certainly gain no honor if, having to choose between two alternatives, safety and war, you obstinately prefer the worse. To maintain our rights against equals, to be politic with superiors, and to be moderate towards inferiors is the path of safety. Reflect once more when we have withdrawn, and say to yourselves over and over again that you are deliberating about your one and only country, which may be saved or may be destroyed by a single decision.

The Athenians left the conference: the Melians, after consulting among themselves, resolved to persevere in their refusal, and made answer as follows:—"Men of Athens, our resolution is unchanged; and we will not in a moment surrender that liberty which our city, founded seven hundred years ago, still enjoys; we will trust to the good-fortune which by the favor of the Gods has hitherto preserved us, and for human help to the Lacedaemonians, and endeavor to save ourselves. We are ready however to be your friends, and the enemies neither of you nor of the Lacedaemonians, and we ask you to leave our country when you have made such a peace as may appear to be in the interest of both parties."

Such was the answer of the Melians; the Athenians, as they quitted the conference, spoke as follows:—"Well, we must say, judging from the decision at which you have arrived, that you are the only men who deem the future to be more certain than the present, and regard things unseen as already realized in your fond anticipation, and that the more you cast yourselves upon the Lacedaemonians and fortune, and hope, and trust them, the more complete will be your ruin."

The Athenian envoys returned to the army; and the generals, when they found that the Melians would not yield, immediately commenced hostilities. They surrounded the town of Melos with a wall, dividing the work among the several contingents. They then left troops of their own and of the allies to keep guard both by land and by sea, and retired with the greater part of their army; the remainder carried on the blockade.

. . . The Melians took that part of the Athenian wall which looked towards the agora<sup>10</sup> by a night assault, killed a few men, and brought in as much corn and other necessities as they could; they

10. market place.

then retreated and remained inactive. After this the Athenians set a better watch. So the summer ended.

In the following winter . . . the Melians took another part of the Athenian wall; for the fortifications were insufficiently guarded. Whereupon the Athenians sent fresh troops, under the command of Philocrates the son of Demeas. The place was now closely invested, and there was treachery among the citizens themselves. So the Melians were induced to surrender at discretion. The Athenians thereupon put to death all who were of military age, and made slaves of the women and children. They then colonized the island, sending thither five hundred settlers of their own.

## EURIPIDES

(480-406 B.C.)

Medea \*

### Characters

MEDEA, <i>princess of Colchis and wife of Jason</i>	KREON, <i>king of Corinth</i>
JASON, <i>son of Aeson, king of Iolcos</i>	AIGEUS, <i>king of Athens</i>
TWO CHILDREN of Medea and Jason	NURSE to Medea
	TUTOR to Medea's children
	MESSENGER
	CHORUS OF CORINTHIAN WOMEN

SCENE—*In front of Medea's house in Corinth. Enter from the house Medea's NURSE.*

NURSE. How I wish the Argo never had reached the land  
Of Colchis, skimming through the blue Symplegades,  
Nor ever had fallen in the glades of Pelion  
The smitten fir-tree to furnish oars for the hands  
Of heroes who in Pelias's name attempted  
The Golden Fleece! For then my mistress Medea  
Would not have sailed for the towers of the land of Iolcos,  
Her heart on fire with passionate love for Jason;  
Nor would she have persuaded the daughters of Pelias

\* Produced in 431 B.C. Our text is a translation by Rex Warner, from *The Medea of Euripides*, John Lane The Bodley Head, Ltd., London, 1944.

1. *Argo*: the ship in which Jason and his companions sailed on the quest for the Golden Fleece.

2. *Symplegades*: clashing rocks, which crushed ships endeavoring to pass between them. They were supposed to be located at the Hellespont, the

passage between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

3. *Pelion*: a mountain in the north of Greece near Iolcos, the place from which Jason sailed.

5. *Pelias*: He seized the kingdom of Iolcos, expelling Aeson, Jason's father. When Jason came to claim his rights, Pelias sent him to get the Golden Fleece.

To kill their father, and now be living here 20  
 In Corinth with her husband and children. She gave  
 Pleasure to the people of her land of exile,  
 And she herself helped Jason in every way.  
 This is indeed the greatest salvation of all,—  
 For the wife not to stand apart from the husband. 15  
 But now there's hatred everywhere. Love is diseased.  
 For, deserting his own children and my mistress,  
 Jason has taken a royal wife to his bed,  
 The daughter of the ruler of this land, Kreon.  
 And poor Medea is slighted, and cries aloud on the 20  
 Vows they made to each other, the right hands clasped  
 In eternal promise. She calls upon the gods to witness  
 What sort of return Jason has made to her love.  
 She lies without food and gives herself up to suffering,  
 Wasting away every moment of the day in tears. 25  
 So it has gone since she knew herself slighted by him.  
 Not stirring an eye, not moving her face from the ground,  
 No more than either a rock or surging sea water  
 She listens when she is given friendly advice.  
 Except that sometimes she twists back her white neck and 30  
 Moans to herself, calling out on her father's name,  
 And her land, and her home betrayed when she came away with  
 A man who now is determined to dishonour her.  
 Poor creature, she has discovered by her sufferings  
 What it means to one not to have lost one's own country. 35  
 She has turned from the children and does not like to see them.  
 I am afraid she may think of some dreadful thing,  
 For her heart is violent. She will never put up with  
 The treatment she is getting. I know and fear her  
 Lest she may sharpen a sword and thrust to the heart, 40  
 Stealing into the palace where the bed is made,  
 Or even kill the king and the new-wedded groom,  
 And thus bring a greater misfortune on herself.  
 She's a strange woman. I know it won't be easy  
 To make an enemy of her and come off best. 45  
 But here the children come. They have finished playing.  
 They have no thought at all of their mother's trouble.

10. *kill . . . father*: After Jason returned to Iolcos with the Fleece and Medea, Pelias' daughters were persuaded by Medea, who had a reputation as a sorceress, to cut Pelias up and boil the pieces, in order to restore him to youth. The experiment was, of course, unsuccessful, but the son of Pelias expelled Jason and Medea from the kingdom, and they took refuge in Corinth.

11. *Corinth*: on the isthmus between the Peloponnese and Attica. In Euripides' time it was a wealthy trading city, a commercial rival of Athens.

19. *Kreon*: Creon.

32. *home betrayed*: Medea, daughter of the king of Colchis, fell in love with Jason and helped him to take the Golden Fleece away from her own country.

Indeed it is not usual for the young to grieve.

[Enter from the right the slave who is the TUTOR to Medea's two small children. The CHILDREN follow him.]

TUTOR. You old retainer of my mistress's household,  
Why are you standing here all alone in front of the 50  
Gates and moaning to yourself over your misfortune?  
Medea could not wish you to leave her alone.

NURSE. Old man, and guardian of the children of Jason,  
If one is a good servant, it's a terrible thing  
When one's master's luck is out; it goes to one's heart. 55  
So I myself have got into such a state of grief  
That a longing stole over me to come outside here  
And tell the earth and air of my mistress's sorrows.

TUTOR. Has the poor lady not yet given up her crying?

NURSE. Given up? She's at the start, not half-way through her 60  
tears.

TUTOR. Poor fool,—if I may call my mistress such a name,—  
How ignorant she is of trouble more to come.

NURSE. What do you mean, old man? You needn't fear to speak.

TUTOR. Nothing. I take back the words which I used just now.

NURSE. Don't, by your beard, hide this from me, your fellow- 65  
servant.

If need be, I'll keep quiet about what you tell me.

TUTOR. I heard a person saying, while I myself seemed  
Not to be paying attention, when I was at the place  
Where the old draught-players sit, by the holy fountain,  
That Kreon, ruler of the land, intends to drive 70  
These children and their mother in exile from Corinth.  
But whether what he said is really true or not  
I do not know. I pray that it may not be true.

NURSE. And will Jason put up with it that his children  
Should suffer so, though he's no friend to their mother? 75

TUTOR. Old ties give place to new ones. As for Jason, he  
No longer has a feeling for this house of ours.

NURSE. It's black indeed for us, when we add new to old  
Sorrows before even the present sky has cleared.

TUTOR. But you be silent, and keep all this to yourself. 80  
It is not the right time to tell our mistress of it.

NURSE. Do you hear, children, what a father he is to you?

I wish he were dead,—but no, he is still my master.

Yet certainly he has proved unkind to his dear ones.

TUTOR. What's strange in that? Have you only just discovered 85  
That everyone loves himself more than his neighbour?  
Some have good reason, others get something out of it.

69. draught-players: checker-players.

So Jason neglects his children for the new bride.

NURSE. Go indoors, children. That will be the best thing.

And you, keep them to themselves as much as possible. 90

Don't bring them near their mother in her angry mood.

For I've seen her already blazing her eyes at them

As though she meant some mischief and I am sure that

She'll not stop raging until she has struck at someone.

May it be an enemy and not a friend she hurts! 95

[MEDEA is heard inside the house.]

MEDEA. Ah, wretch! Ah, lost in my sufferings,

I wish, I wish I might die.

NURSE. What did I say, dear children? Your mother

Frets her heart and frets it to anger.

Run away quickly into the house, 100

And keep well out of her sight.

Don't go anywhere near, but be careful

Of the wildness and bitter nature

Of that proud mind.

Go now! Run quickly indoors. 105

It is clear that she soon will put lightning

In that cloud of her cries that is rising

With a passion increasing. Oh, what will she do,

Proud-hearted and not to be checked on her course,

A soul bitten into with wrong? 110

[The TUTOR takes the children into the house.]

MEDEA. Ah, I have suffered

What should be wept for bitterly. I hate you,

Children of a hateful mother. I curse you

And your father. Let the whole house crash.

NURSE. Ah, I pity you, you poor creature. 115

How can your children share in their father's

Wickedness? Why do you hate them? Oh children,

How much I fear that something may happen!

Great people's tempers are terrible, always

Having their own way, seldom checked, 120

Dangerous they shift from mood to mood.

How much better to have been accustomed

To live on equal terms with one's neighbours.

I would like to be safe and grow old in a

Humble way. What is moderate sounds best, 125

Also in practice is best for everyone.

Greatness brings no profit to people.

God indeed, when in anger, brings

Greater ruin to great men's houses.



[Enter, on the right, a CHORUS OF CORINTHIAN WOMEN.  
They have come to enquire about MEDEA and to attempt to  
console her.]

CHORUS. I heard the voice, I heard the cry 130  
Of Colchis' wretched daughter.

Tell me, mother, is she not yet  
At rest? Within the double gates  
Of the court I heard her cry. I am sorry  
For the sorrow of this home. O, say, what has happened? 135

NURSE. There is no home. It's over and done with.  
Her husband holds fast to his royal wedding,  
While she, my mistress, cries out her eyes  
There in her room, and takes no warmth from  
Any word of any friend. 140

MEDEA. Oh, I wish  
That lightning from heaven would split my head open.  
Oh, what use have I now for life?  
I would find my release in death  
And leave hateful existence behind me. 145

CHOR. O God and Earth and Heaven!  
Did you hear what a cry was that  
Which the sad wife sings?  
Poor foolish one, why should you long  
For that appalling rest? 150  
The final end of death comes fast.  
No need to pray for that.  
Suppose your man gives honour  
To another woman's bed.  
It often happens. Don't be hurt. 155  
God will be your friend in this.  
You must not waste away  
Grieving too much for him who shared your bed.

MEDEA. Great Themis, lady Artemis, behold  
The things I suffer, though I made him promise, 160  
My hateful husband. I pray that I may see him,  
Him and his bride and all their palace shattered  
For the wrong they dare to do me without cause.  
Oh, my father! Oh, my country! In what dishonour  
I left you, killing my own brother for it. 165

NURSE. Do you hear what she says, and how she cries  
On Themis, the goddess of Promises, and on Zeus,  
Whom we believe to be the Keeper of Oaths?

159. *Themis*: justice. *Artemis*: the  
protector of women in pain and distress.

165. *my own brother*: Medea killed  
him to delay the pursuit when she  
escaped with Jason.

Of this I am sure, that no small thing  
Will appease my mistress's anger.

170

CHOR. Will she come into our presence?  
Will she listen when we are speaking  
To the words we say?

I wish she might relax her rage  
And temper of her heart.

175

My willingness to help will never  
Be wanting to my friends.

But go inside and bring her  
Out of the house to us,

And speak kindly to her: hurry,  
Before she wrongs her own.

180

This passion of hers moves to something great.

NURSE. I will, but I doubt if I'll manage  
To win my mistress over.

But still I'll attempt it to please you.

185

Such a look she will flash on her servants

If any comes near with a message,

Like a lioness guarding her cubs.

It is right, I think, to consider

Both stupid and lacking in foresight

190

Those poets of old who wrote songs

For revells and dinners and banquets,

Pleasant sounds for men living at ease;

But none of them all has discovered

How to put an end with their singing

195

Or musical instruments grief,

Bitter grief, from which death and disaster

Cheat the hopes of a house. Yet how good

If music could cure men of this! But why raise

To no purpose the voice at a banquet? For *there* is

200

Already abundance of pleasure for men

With a joy of its own.

[*The NURSE goes into the house.*]

CHOR. I heard a shriek that is laden with sorrow.

Shrilling out her hard grief she cries out

Upon him who betrayed both her bed and her marriage.

205

Wronged, she calls on the gods,

On the justice of Zeus, the oath sworn,

Which brought her away

To the opposite shore of the Greeks

Through the gloomy salt straits to the gateway

210

Of the salty unlimited sea.

[*MEDEA, attended by servants, comes out of the house.*]

**MEDEA.** Women of Corinth, I have come outside to you  
 Lest you should be indignant with me; for I know  
 That many people are overproud, some when alone,  
 And others when in company. And those who live 215  
 Quietly, as I do, get a bad reputation.  
 For a just judgement is not evident in the eyes  
 When a man at first sight hates another, before  
 Learning his character, being in no way injured;  
 And a foreigner especially must adapt himself. 220  
 I'd not approve of even a fellow-countryman  
 Who by pride and want of manners offends his neighbours.  
 But on me this thing has fallen so unexpectedly,  
 It has broken my heart. I am finished. I let go  
 All my life's joy. My friends, I only want to die. 225  
 It was everything to me to think well of one man,  
 And he, my own husband, has turned out wholly vile.  
 Of all things which are living and can form a judgement  
 We women are the most unfortunate creatures.  
 Firstly, with an excess of wealth it is required 230  
 For us to buy a husband and take for our bodies  
 A master; for not to take one is even worse.  
 And now the question is serious whether we **take**  
 A good or bad one; for there is no easy escape  
 For a woman, nor can she say no to her **marriage**. 235  
 She arrives among new modes of behaviour **and** manners,  
 And needs prophetic power, unless she has **learned** at home,  
 How best to manage him who shares the bed with her.  
 And if we work out all this well and carefully,  
 And the husband lives with us and lightly bears his yoke, 240  
 Then life is enviable. If not, I'd rather die.  
 A man, when he's tired of the company in his home,  
 Goes out of the house and puts an end to his boredom  
 And turns to a friend or companion of his own age.  
 But we are forced to keep our eyes on one alone. 245  
 What they say of us is that we have a peaceful time  
 Living at home, while they do the fighting in war.  
 How wrong they are! I would very much rather stand  
 Three times in the front of battle than bear one child.  
 Yet what applies to me does not apply to you. 250  
 You have a country. Your family home is here.  
 You enjoy life and the company of your friends.

220. *a foreigner . . . himself*: Foreign residents were encouraged to come to Athens, but were rarely admitted to the rights of full citizenship, which was a jealously guarded privilege.

229. *women*: Athenian rights and institutions were made for men; the women had few privileges and almost no legal rights. The following two lines refer to the dowry which had to be provided for the bride.

But I am deserted, a refugee, thought nothing of  
 By my husband,—something he won in a foreign land.  
 I have no mother or brother, nor any relation 255  
 With whom I can take refuge in this sea of woe.  
 This much then is the service I would beg from you:  
 If I can find the means or devise any scheme  
 To pay my husband back for what he has done to me,—  
 Him and his father-in-law and the girl who married him,— 260  
 Just to keep silent. For in other ways a woman  
 Is full of fear, defenceless, dreads the sight of cold  
 Steel; but, when once she is wronged in the matter of love,  
 No other soul can hold so many thoughts of blood.

CHOR. This I will promise. You are in the right, Medea, 265  
 In paying your husband back. I am not surprised at you  
 For being sad.

But look! I see our king Kreon  
 Approaching. He will tell us of some new plan.

[Enter, from the right, KREON, with attendants.]

KREON. You, with that angry look, so set against your husband,  
 Medea, I order you to leave my territories 270  
 An exile, and take along with you your two children,  
 And not to waste time doing it. It is my decree,  
 And I will see it done. I will not return home  
 Until you are cast from the boundaries of my land.

MEDEA. Oh, this is the end for me. I am utterly lost. 275  
 Now I am in the full force of the storm of hate  
 And have no harbour from ruin to reach easily.  
 Yet still, in spite of it all, I'll ask the question:  
 What is your reason, Kreon, for banishing me?

KREON. I am afraid of you,—why should I dissemble it?— 280  
 Afraid that you may injure my daughter mortally.  
 Many things accumulate to support my feeling.  
 You are a clever woman, versed in evil arts,  
 And are angry at having lost your husband's love.  
 I hear that you are threatening, so they tell me, 285  
 To do something against my daughter and Jason  
 And me, too. I shall take my precautions first.  
 I tell you, I prefer to earn your hatred now  
 Than to be soft-hearted and afterwards regret it.

MEDEA. This is not the first time, Kreon. Often previously 290  
 Through being considered clever I have suffered much.  
 A person of sense ought never to have his children  
 Brought up to be more clever than the average.  
 For, apart from cleverness bringing them no profit,  
 It will make them objects of envy and ill-will. 295

If you put new ideas before the eyes of fools  
 They'll think you foolish and worthless into the bargain;  
 And if you are thought superior to those who have  
 Some reputation for learning, you will become hated.  
 I have some knowledge myself of how this happens; 300  
 For being clever, I find that some will envy me,  
 Others object to me. Yet all my cleverness  
 Is not so much.

Well, then, are you frightened, Kreon,  
 That I should harm you? There is no need. It is not  
 My way to transgress the authority of a king. 305  
 How have you injured me? You gave your daughter away  
 To the man you wanted. O, certainly I hate  
 My husband, but you, I think, have acted wisely;  
 Nor do I grudge it you that your affairs go well.  
 May the marriage be a lucky one! Only let me 310  
 Live in this land. For even though I have been wronged,  
 I will not raise my voice, but submit to my betters.  
 KREON. What you say sounds gentle enough. Still in my heart  
 I greatly dread that you are plotting some evil,  
 And therefore I trust you even less than before. 315  
 A sharp-tempered woman, or for that matter a man,  
 Is easier to deal with than the clever type  
 Who holds her tongue. No. You must go. No need for more  
 Speeches. The thing is fixed. By no manner of means  
 Shall you, an enemy of mine, stay in my country. 320

MEDEA. I beg you. By your knees, by your new-wedded girl.  
 KREON. Your words are wasted. You will never persuade me.  
 MEDEA. Will you drive me out, and give no heed to my prayers?  
 KREON. I will, for I love my family more than you.  
 MEDEA. O my country! How bitterly now I remember you! 325  
 KREON. I love my country too,—next after my children.  
 MEDEA. O what an evil to men is passionate love!  
 KREON. That would depend on the luck that goes along with it.  
 MEDEA. O God, do not forget who is the cause of this!  
 KREON. Go. It is no use. Spare me the pain of forcing you. 330  
 MEDEA. I'm spared no pain. I lack no pain to be spared me.  
 KREON. Then you'll be removed by force by one of my men.  
 MEDEA. No, Kreon, not that! But do listen, I beg you.  
 KREON. Woman, you seem to want to create a disturbance.  
 MEDEA. I will go into exile. This is not what I beg for. 335  
 KREON. Why then this violence and clinging to my hand?  
 MEDEA. Allow me to remain here just for this one day,  
 So I may consider where to live in my exile,  
 And look for support for my children, since their father

Chooses to make no kind of provision for them. 340  
 Have pity on them! You have children of your own.  
 It is natural for you to look kindly on them.  
 For myself I do not mind if I go into exile.  
 It is the children being in trouble that I mind.

KREON. There is nothing tyrannical about my nature, 345  
 And by showing mercy I have often been the loser.  
 Even now I know that I am making a mistake.  
 All the same you shall have your will. But this I tell you,  
 That if the light of heaven tomorrow shall see you,  
 You and your children in the confines of my land, 350  
 You die. This word I have spoken is firmly fixed.  
 But now, if you must stay, stay for this day alone.  
 For in it you can do none of the things I fear.

[Exit KREON with his attendants.]

CHOR. Oh, unfortunate one! Oh, cruel! 355  
 Where will you turn? Who will help you?  
 What house or what land to preserve you  
 From ill can you find?  
 Medea, a god has thrown suffering  
 Upon you in waves of despair.

MEDEA. Things have gone badly every way. No doubt of that 360  
 But not these things this far, and don't imagine so.  
 There are still trials to come for the new-wedded pair,  
 And for their relations pain that will mean something.  
 Do you think that I would ever have fawned on that man  
 Unless I had some end to gain or profit in it? 365  
 I would not even have spoken or touched him with my hands.  
 But he has got to such a pitch of foolishness  
 That, though he could have made nothing of all my plans  
 By exiling me, he has given me this one day  
 To stay here, and in this I will make dead bodies 370  
 Of three of my enemies,—father, the girl and my husband.  
 I have many ways of death which I might suit to them,  
 And do not know, friends, which one to take in hand;  
 Whether to set fire underneath their bridal mansion,  
 Or sharpen a sword and thrust it to the heart, 375  
 Stealing into the palace where the bed is made.  
 There is just one obstacle to this. If I am caught  
 Breaking into the house and scheming against it,  
 I shall die, and give my enemies cause for laughter.  
 It is best to go by the straight road, the one in which 380  
 I am most skilled, and make away with them by poison.  
 So be it then.

And now suppose them dead. What town will receive me?  
 What friend will offer me a refuge in his land,  
 Or the guarantee of his house and save my own life? 385  
 There is none. So I must wait a little time yet,  
 And if some sure defence should then appear for me,  
 In craft and silence I will set about this murder.  
 But if my fate should drive me on without help,  
 Even though death is certain, I will take the sword 390  
 Myself and kill, and steadfastly advance to crime.  
 It shall not be,—I swear it by her, my mistress,  
 Whom most I honour and have chosen as partner,  
 Hecate, who dwells in the recesses of my hearth,—  
 That any man shall be glad to have injured me. 395  
 Bitter I will make their marriage for them and mournful,  
 Bitter the alliance and the driving me out of the land.  
 Ah, come, Medea, in your plotting and scheming  
 Leave nothing untried of all those things which you know.  
 Go forward to the dreadful act. The test has come 400  
 For resolution. You see how you are treated. Never  
 Shall you be mocked by Jason's Corinthian wedding,  
 Whose father was noble, whose grandfather Helios.  
 You have the skill. What is more, you were born a woman,  
 And women, though most helpless in doing good deeds, 405  
 Are of every evil the cleverest of contrivers.

CHOR. Flow backward to your sources, sacred rivers,  
 And let the world's great order be reversed.  
 It is the thoughts of *men* that are deceitful,  
 Their pledges that are loose. 410  
 Story shall now turn my condition to a fair one,  
 Women are paid their due.  
 No more shall evil-sounding fame be theirs.

Cease now, you muses of the ancient singers,  
 To tell the tale of my unfaithfulness; 415  
 For not on us did Phoebus, lord of music,  
 Bestow the lyre's divine  
 Power, for otherwise I should have sung an answer  
 To the other sex. Long time  
 Has much to tell of us, and much of them. 420

You sailed away from your father's home,  
 With a heart on fire you passed

394. *Hecate*: the patron of witchcraft, sometimes identified with Artemis. Medea has a statue and shrine of Hecate in the house.

403. *Helios*: the sun, father of Medea's father, Aeetes.  
 416. *Phoebus*: Apollo.

The double rocks of the sea.

And now in a foreign country

You have lost your rest in a widowed bed,

425

And are driven forth, a refugee

In dishonour from the land.

Good faith has gone, and no more remains

In great Greece a sense of shame.

It has flown away to the sky.

430

No father's house for a haven

Is at hand for you now, and another queen

Of your bed has dispossessed you and

Is mistress of your home.

[Enter JASON, with attendants.]

JASON. This is not the first occasion that I have noticed

435

How hopeless it is to deal with a stubborn temper.

For, with reasonable submission to our ruler's will,

You might have lived in this land and kept your home.

As it is you are going to be exiled for your loose speaking.

Not that I mind myself. You are free to continue

440

Telling everyone that Jason is a worthless man.

But as to your talk about the king, consider

Yourself most lucky that exile is your punishment.

I, for my part, have always tried to calm down

The anger of the king, and wished you to remain.

445

But you will not give up your folly, continually

Speaking ill of him, and so you are going to be banished.

All the same, and in spite of your conduct, I'll not desert

My friends, but have come to make some provision for you,

So that you and the children may not be penniless

450

Or in need of anything in exile. Certainly

Exile brings many troubles with it. And even

If you hate me, I cannot think badly of you.

MEDEA. O coward in every way,—that is what I call you,

With bitterest reproach for your lack of manliness,

455

You have come, you, my worst enemy, have come to me!

It is not an example of over-confidence

Or of boldness thus to look your friends in the face,

Friends you have injured,—no, it is the worst of all

Human diseases, shamelessness. But you did well

460

To come, for I can speak ill of you and lighten

My heart, and you will suffer while you are listening.

And first I will begin from what happened first.

I saved your life, and every Greek knows I saved it,

Who was a ship-mate of yours aboard the Argo,

465



When you were sent to control the bulls that breathed fire  
 And yoke them, and when you would sow that deadly field.  
 Also that snake, who encircled with his many folds  
 The Golden Fleece and guarded it and never slept,  
 I killed, and so gave you the safety of the light. 470  
 And I myself betrayed my father and my home,  
 And came with you to Pelias' land of Iolcos.  
 And then, showing more willingness to help than wisdom,  
 I killed him, Pelias, with a most dreadful death  
 At his own daughters' hands, and took away your fear. 475  
 This is how I behaved to you, you wretched man,  
 And you forsook me, took another bride to bed  
 Though you had children; for, if that had not been,  
 You would have had an excuse for another wedding.  
 Faith in your word has gone. Indeed I cannot tell 480  
 Whether you think the gods whose names you swore by then  
 Have ceased to rule and that new standards are set up,  
 Since you must know you have broken your word to me.  
 O my right hand, and the knees which you often clasped  
 In supplication, how senselessly I am treated 485  
 By this bad man, and how my hopes have missed their mark!  
 Come, I will share my thoughts as though you were a friend,—  
 You! Can I think that you would ever treat me well?  
 But I will do it, and these questions will make you  
 Appear the baser. Where am I to go? To my father's? 490  
 Him I betrayed and his land when I came with you.  
 To Pelias' wretched daughters? What a fine welcome  
 They would prepare for me who murdered their father!  
 For this is my position,—hated by my friends!  
 At home, I have, in kindness to you, made enemies 495  
 Of others whom there was no need to have injured.  
 And how happy among Greek women you have made me  
 On your side for all this! A distinguished husband  
 I have,—for breaking promises. When in misery  
 I am cast out of the land and go into exile, 500  
 Quite without friends and all alone with my children,  
 That will be a fine shame for the new-wedded groom,  
 For his children to wander as beggars and she who saved him.  
 O God, you have given to mortals a sure method  
 Of telling the gold that is pure from the counterfeit; 505  
 Why is there no mark engraved upon men's bodies,

466. *bulls . . . fire*: This and the following lines refer to ordeals through which Jason had to pass to win the Fleece, and in which Medea helped him. He had to yoke a team of fire-

breathing bulls, then sow a field which immediately sprouted armed warriors, then deal with the snake which guarded the Fleece.

By which we could know the true ones from the false ones?

CHOR. It is a strange form of anger, difficult to cure

When two friends turn upon each other in hatred.

JASON. As for me, it seems I must be no bad speaker.

510

But, like a man who has a good grip of the tiller,

Reef up his sail, and so run away from under

This mouthing tempest, woman, of your bitter tongue.

Since you insist on building up your kindness to me,

My view is that Cypris was alone responsible

515

Of men and gods for the preserving of my life.

You are clever enough,—but really I need not enter

Into the story of how it was love's inescapable

Power that compelled you to keep my person safe.

On this I will not go into too much detail.

520

In so far as you helped me, you did well enough.

But on this question of saving me, I can prove

You have certainly got from me more than you gave.

Firstly, instead of living among barbarians,

You inhabit a Greek land and understand our ways,

525

How to live by law instead of the sweet will of force.

And all the Greeks considered you a clever woman.

You were honoured for it; while, if you were living at

The ends of the earth, nobody would have heard of you.

For my part, rather than stores of gold in my house

530

Or power to sing even sweeter songs than Orpheus,

I'd choose the fate that made me a distinguished man.

There is my reply to your story of my labours.

Remember it was you who started the argument.

Next for your attack on my wedding with the princess:

535

Here I will prove that, first, it was a clever move,

Secondly, a wise one, and, finally, that I made it

In your best interests and the children's. Please keep calm.

When I arrived here from the land of Iolcos,

Involved, as I was, in every kind of difficulty,

540

What luckier chance could I have come across than this,

An exile to marry the daughter of the king?

It was not,—the point that seems to upset you—that I

Grew tired of your bed and felt the need of a new bride;

Nor with any wish to outdo your number of children.

545

We have enough already. I am quite content.

But,—this was the main reason—that we might live well,

And not be short of anything. I know that all

A man's friends leave him stone-cold if he becomes poor.

Also that I might bring my children up worthily

550

Of my position, and, by producing more of them  
 To be brothers of yours, we would draw the families  
 Together and all be happy. You need no children.  
 And it pays me to do good to those I have now  
 By having others. Do you think this a bad plan? 555  
 You wouldn't if the love question hadn't upset you.  
 But you women have got into such a state of mind  
 That, if your life at night is good, you think you have  
 Everything; but, if in that quarter things go wrong,  
 You will consider your best and truest interests 560  
 Most hateful. It would have been better far for men  
 To have got their children in some other way, and women  
 Not to have existed. Then life would have been good.

CHOR. Jason, though you have made this speech of yours look well,  
 Still I think, even though others do not agree, 565  
 You have betrayed your wife and are acting badly.

MEDEA. Surely in many ways I hold different views  
 From others, for I think that the plausible speaker  
 Who is a villain deserves the greatest punishment.  
 Confident in his tongue's power to adorn evil, 570  
 He stops at nothing. Yet he is not really wise.  
 As in your case. There is no need to put on the airs  
 Of a clever speaker, for one word will lay you flat.  
 If you were not a coward, you would not have married  
 Behind my back, but discussed it with me first. 575

JASON. And you, no doubt, would have furthered the proposal,  
 If I had told you of it, you who even now  
 Are incapable of controlling your bitter temper.

MEDEA. It was not that. No, you thought it was not respectable  
 As you got on in years to have a foreign wife. 580

JASON. Make sure of this: it was not because of a woman  
 I made the royal alliance in which I now live,  
 But, as I said before, I wished to preserve you  
 And breed a royal progeny to be brothers  
 To the children I have now, a sure defence to us. 585

MEDEA. Let me have no happy fortune that brings pain with it,  
 Or prosperity which is upsetting to the mind!

JASON. Change your ideas of what you want, and show more  
 sense.

Do not consider painful what is good for you,  
 Nor, when you are lucky, think yourself unfortunate. 590

MEDEA. You can insult me. You have somewhere to turn to.  
 But I shall go from this land into exile, friendless.

JASON. It was what you chose yourself. Don't blame others for it.

MEDEA. And how did I choose it? Did I betray my husband?

JASON. You called down wicked curses on the king's family. 595

MEDEA. A curse, that is what I am become to your house too.

JASON. I do not propose to go into all the rest of it;

But, if you wish for the children or for yourself

In exile to have some of my money to help you,

Say so, for I am prepared to give with open hand, 600

Or to provide you with introductions to my friends

Who will treat you well. You are a fool if you do not

Accept this. Cease your anger and you will profit.

MEDEA. I shall never accept the favours of friends of yours,

Nor take a thing from you, so you need not offer it. 605

There is no benefit in the gifts of a bad man.

JASON. Then, in any case, I call the gods to witness that

I wish to help you and the children in every way,

But you refuse what is good for you. Obstinate

You push away your friends. You are sure to suffer for it. 610

MEDEA. Go! No doubt you hanker for your virginal bride,

And are guilty of lingering too long out of her house.

Enjoy your wedding. But perhaps,—with the help of God—

You will make the kind of marriage that you will regret.

[JASON goes out with his attendants.]

CHOR. When love is in excess 615

It brings a man no honour

Nor any worthiness.

But if in moderation Cypris comes,

There is no other power at all so gracious.

O goddess, never on me let loose the unerring 620

Shaft of your bow in the poison of desire.

Let my heart be wise.

It is the gods' best gift.

On me let mighty Cypris

Inflict no wordy wars or restless anger 625

To urge my passion to a different love.

But with discernment may she guide women's weddings,

Honouring most what is peaceful in the bed.

O country and home,

Never, never may I be without you, 630

Living the hopeless life,

Hard to pass through and painful,

Most pitiable of all.

Let death first lay me low and death

Free me from this daylight. 635

There is no sorrow above

The loss of a native land.

I have seen it myself,  
 Do not tell of a secondhand story.  
 Neither city nor friend  
 Pitied you when you suffered  
 The worst of sufferings.  
 O let him die ungraced whose heart  
 Will not reward his friends,  
 Who cannot open an honest mind  
 No friend will be of mine.

640

645

[Enter AIGEUS, king of Athens, an old friend of MEDEA.]

AIGEUS. Medea, greeting! This is the best introduction

Of which men know for conversation between friends.

MEDEA. Greeting to you too, Aigeus, son of King Pandion,

Where have you come from to visit this country's soil?

650

AIGEUS. I have just left the ancient oracle of Phocbus.

MEDEA. And why did you go to earth's prophetic centre?

AIGEUS. I went to inquire how children might be born to me.

MEDEA. Is it so? Your life still up to this point childless?

AIGEUS. Yes. By the fate of some power we have no children.

655

MEDEA. Have you a wife, or is there none to share your bed?

AIGEUS. There is. Yes, I am joined to my wife in marriage.

MEDEA. And what did Phocbus say to you about children?

AIGEUS. Words too wise for a mere man to guess their meaning.

MEDEA. Is it proper for me to be told the God's reply?

660

AIGEUS. It is. For sure what is needed is cleverness.

MEDEA. Then what was his message? Tell me, if I may hear.

AIGEUS. I am not to loosen the hanging foot of the wine-skin . . .

MEDEA. Until you have done something, or reached some country?

AIGEUS. Until I return again to my hearth and house.

665

MEDEA. And for what purpose have you journeyed to this land?

AIGEUS. There is a man called Pittheus, king of Troezen.

MEDEA. A son of Pelops, they say, a most righteous man.

AIGEUS. With him I wish to discuss the reply of the god.

MEDEA. Yes. He is wise and experienced in such matters.

670

AIGEUS. And to me also the dearest of all my spear-friends.

MEDEA. Well, I hope you have good luck, and achieve your will.

AIGEUS. But why this downcast eye of yours, and this pale cheek?

MEDEA. O Aigeus, my husband has been the worst of all to me.

AIGEUS. What do you mean? Say clearly what has caused this  
 grief.

675

MEDEA. Jason wrongs me, though I have never injured him.

647. *Aigeus*: Aegeus.

663. *not to loosen . . . wine-skin*: This cryptic phrase probably means "not to have intercourse."

667. *Pittheus*: Aigeus' father-in-law. *Troezen*: in the Peloponnese. Corinth was on the way from Delphi to Troezen.

671. *spear-friends*: allies in war, companions in fighting.

AIGEUS. What has he done? Tell me about it in clearer words.

MEDEA. He has taken a wife to his house, supplanting me.

AIGEUS. Surely he would not dare to do a thing like that.

MEDEA. Be sure he has. Once dear, I now am slighted by him. 680

AIGEUS. Did he fall in love? Or is he tired of your love?

MEDEA. He was greatly in love, this traitor to his friends.

AIGEUS. Then let him go, if, as you say, he is so bad.

MEDEA. A passionate love,—for an alliance with the king.

AIGEUS. And who gave him his wife? Tell me the rest of it. 685

MEDEA. It was Kreon, he who rules this land of Corinth.

AIGEUS. Indeed, Medea, your grief was understandable.

MEDEA. I am ruined. And there is more to come: I am banished.

AIGEUS. Banished? By whom? Here you tell me of a new wrong.

MEDEA. Kreon drives me an exile from the land of Corinth. 690

AIGEUS. Does Jason consent? I cannot approve of this.

MEDEA. He pretends not to, but he will put up with it.

Ah, Aigeus, I beg and beseech you, by your beard

And by your knees I am making myself your suppliant,

Have pity on me, have pity on your poor friend, 695

And do not let me go into exile desolate,

But receive me in your land and at your very hearth.

So may your love, with God's help, lead to the bearing

Of children, and so may you yourself die happy.

You do not know what a chance you have come on here. 700

I will end your childlessness, and I will make you able

To beget children. The drugs I know can do this.

AIGEUS. For many reasons, woman, I am anxious to do

This favour for you. First, for the sake of the gods,

And then for the birth of children which you promise, 705

For in that respect I am entirely at my wits' end.

But this is my position: if you reach my land,

I, being in my rights, will try to befriend you.

But this much I must warn you of beforehand:

I shall not agree to take you out of this country; 710

But if you by yourself can reach my house, then you

Shall stay there safely. To none will I give you up.

But from this land you must make your escape yourself,

For I do not wish to incur blame from my friends.

MEDEA. It shall be so. But, if I might have a pledge from you 715

For this, then I would have from you all I desire.

AIGEUS. Do you not trust me? What is it rankles with you?

MEDEA. I trust you, yes. But the house of Pelias hates me,

And so does Kreon. If you are bound by this oath,

When they try to drag me from your land, you will not 720

Abandon me; but if our pact is only words,

With no oath to the gods, you will be lightly armed,  
 Unable to resist their summons. I am weak,  
 While they have wealth to help them and a royal house.

AIGEUS. You show much foresight for such negotiations. 725

Well, if you will have it so, I will not refuse.

For, both on my side this will be the safest way  
 To have some excuse to put forward to your enemies,  
 And for you it is more certain. You may name the gods.

MEDEA. Swear by the plain of Earth, and Helios, father 730  
 Of my father, and name together all the gods. . . .

AIGEUS. That I will act or not act in what way? Speak.

MEDEA. That you yourself will never cast me from your land,  
 Nor, if any of my enemies should demand me,  
 Will you, in your life, willingly hand me over. 735

AIGEUS. I swear by the Earth, by the holy light of Helios,  
 By all the gods, I will abide by this you say.

MEDEA. Enough. And, if you fail, what shall happen to you?

AIGEUS. What comes to those who have no regard for heaven.

MEDEA. Go on your way. Farewell. For I am satisfied, 740  
 And I will reach your city as soon as I can,  
 Having done the deed I have to do and gained my end.

[AIGEUS goes out.]

CHOR. May Hermes, god of travellers,  
 Escort you, Aigeus, to your home!  
 And may you have the things you wish 745  
 So eagerly; for you  
 Appear to me to be a generous man.

MEDEA. God, and God's daughter, justice, and light of Helios!  
 Now, friends, has come the time of my triumph over  
 My enemies, and now my foot is on the road. 750

Now I am confident they will pay the penalty.

For this man, Aigeus, has been like a harbour to me

In all my plans just where I was most distressed.

To him I can fasten the cable of my safety  
 When I have reached the town and fortress of Pallas. 755

And now I shall tell to you the whole of my plan.

Listen to these words that are not spoken idly.

I shall send one of my servants to find Jason

And request him to come once more into my sight.

And when he comes, the words I'll say will be soft ones. 760

I'll say that I agree with him, that I approve

The royal wedding he has made, betraying me.

I'll say it was profitable, an excellent idea.

But I shall beg that my children may remain here:

755. town . . . Pallas: Athens, city of Pallas Athene.

- Not that I would leave in a country that hates me  
 Children of mine to feel their enemies' insults,  
 But that by a trick I may kill the king's daughter.  
 For I will send the children with gifts in their hands  
 To carry to the bride, so as not to be banished,—  
 A finely woven dress and a golden diadem. 765  
 And if she takes them and wears them upon her skin  
 She and all who touch the girl will die in agony;  
 Such poison will I lay upon the gifts I send.  
 But there, however, I must leave that account paid.  
 I weep to think of what a deed I have to do 770  
 Next after that; for I shall kill my own children.  
 My children, there is none who can give them safety.  
 And when I have ruined the whole of Jason's house,  
 I shall leave the land and flee from the murder of my  
 Dear children, and I shall have done a dreadful deed. 775  
 For it is not bearable to be mocked by enemies.  
 So it must happen. What profit have I in life?  
 I have no land, no home, no refuge from my pain.  
 My mistake was made the time I left behind me  
 My father's house, and trusted the words of a Greek, 780  
 Who, with heaven's help, will pay me the price for that.  
 For those children he had from me he will never  
 See alive again, nor will he on his new bride  
 Beget another child, for she is to be forced  
 To die a most terrible death by these my poisons. 785  
 Let no one think me a weak one, feeble-spirited,  
 A stay-at-home, but rather just the opposite,  
 One who can hurt my enemies and help my friends;  
 For the lives of such persons are most remembered.  
 CHOR. Since you have shared the knowledge of your plan with us, 790  
 I both wish to help you and support the normal  
 Ways of mankind, and tell you not to do this thing.  
 MEDEA. I can do no other thing. It is understandable  
 For you to speak thus. You have not suffered as I have.  
 CHOR. But can you have the heart to kill your flesh and blood? 800  
 MEDEA. Yes, for this is the best way to wound my husband.  
 CHOR. And you too. Of women you will be most unhappy.  
 MEDEA. So it must be. No compromise is possible.  
 [*She turns to the NURSE.*]  
 Go, you, at once, and tell Jason to come to me.  
 You I employ on all affairs of greatest trust. 805  
 Say nothing of these decisions which I have made,  
 If you love your mistress, if you were born a woman.  
 CHOR. From of old the children of Erechtheus are



Splendid, the sons of blessed gods. They dwell  
 In Athens' holy and unconquered land, 810  
 Where famous Wisdom feeds them and they pass gaily  
 Always through that most brilliant air where once, they say,  
 That golden Harmony gave birth to the nine  
 Pure Muses of Pieria.

And beside the sweet flow of Cephisos' stream, 815  
 Where Cypris sailed, they say, to draw the water,  
 And mild soft breezes breathed along her path,  
 And on her hair were flung the sweet-smelling garlands  
 Of flowers of roses by the Lovers, the companions  
 Of Wisdom, her escort, the helpers of men 820  
 In every kind of excellenc.

How then can these holy rivers  
 Or this holy land love you,  
 Or the city find you a home,  
 You, who will kill your children, 825  
 You, not pure with the rest?  
 O think of the blow at your children  
 And think of the blood that you shed.  
 O, over and over I beg you,  
 By your knees I beg you do not 830  
 Be the murderess of your babes!

O where will you find the courage  
 Or the skill of hand and heart,  
 When you set yourself to attempt  
 A deed so dreadful to do? 835  
 How, when you look upon them,  
 Can you tearlessly hold the decision  
 For murder? You will not be able,  
 When your children fall down and implore you,  
 You will not be able to dip 840  
 Steadfast your hand in their blood.

[Enter JASON with attendants.]

JASON. I have come at your request. Indeed, although you are  
 Bitter against me, this you shall have: I will listen  
 To what new thing you want, woman, to get from me.

810. *unconquered*: It was the Athenians' boast that their descent from the original settlers was uninterrupted by any invasion. There is a topical reference here, for the play was produced in 431 B.C., in a time of imminent war.

809-814. *They dwell . . . Pieria*: The sentence means that the fortunate balance ("Harmony") of the elements

and the genius of the people produced the cultivation of the arts ("the nine pure Muses"). Pieria was a fountain in Boeotia where the Muses were supposed to live.

815. *Cephisos*: an Athenian river. Cypris, mentioned in the next line, is the goddess of love and therefore of the principle of fertility.

MEDEA. Jason, I beg you to be forgiving towards me 845  
 For what I said. It is natural for you to bear with  
 My temper, since we have had much love together.  
 I have talked with myself about this and I have  
 Reproached myself. 'Fool' I said, 'why am I so mad?  
 Why am I set against those who have planned wisely? 850  
 Why make myself an enemy of the authorities  
 And of my husband, who does the best thing for me  
 By marrying royalty and having children who  
 Will be as brothers to my own? What is wrong with me?  
 Let me give up anger, for the gods are kind to me. 855  
 Have I not children, and do I not know that we  
 In exile from our country must be short of friends?'  
 When I considered this I saw that I had shown  
 Great lack of sense, and that my anger was foolish.  
 Now I agree with you. I think that you are wise 860  
 In having this other wife as well as me, and I  
 Was mad. I should have helped you in these plans of yours,  
 Have joined in the wedding, stood by the marriage bed,  
 Have taken pleasure in attendance on your bride.  
 But we women are what we are,—perhaps a little 865  
 Worthless; and you men must not be like us in this,  
 Nor be foolish in return when we are foolish.  
 Now I give in, and admit that then I was wrong.  
 I have come to a better understanding now.

*[She turns towards the house.]*

Children, come here, my children, come outdoors to us! 870  
 Welcome your father with me, and say goodbye to him,  
 And with your mother, who just now was his enemy,  
 Join again in making friends with him who loves us.

*[Enter the CHILDREN, attended by the TUTOR.]*

We have made peace, and all our anger is over.  
 Take hold of his right hand,—O God, I am thinking 875  
 Of something which may happen in the secret future.  
 O children, will you just so, after a long life,  
 Hold out your loving arms at the grave? O children,  
 How ready to cry I am, how full of foreboding!  
 I am ending at last this quarrel with your father, 880  
 And, look, my soft eyes have suddenly filled with tears.

CHOR. And the pale tears have started also in my eyes.

O may the trouble not grow worse than now it is!

JASON. I approve of what you say. And I cannot blame you 885  
 Even for what you said before. It is natural  
 For a woman to be wild with her husband when he  
 Goes in for secret love. But now your mind has turned

To better reasoning. In the end you have come to  
The right decision, like the clever woman you are.  
And of you, children, your father is taking care.

890

He has made, with God's help, ample provision for you.  
For I think that a time will come when you will be  
The leading people in Corinth with your brothers.

You must grow up. As to the future, your father  
And those of the gods who love him will deal with that.

895

I want to see you, when you have become young men,  
Healthy and strong, better men than my enemies.

Medea, why are your eyes all wet with pale tears?

Why is your cheek so white and turned away from me?

Are not these words of mine pleasing for you to hear?

900

MEDEA. It is nothing. I was thinking about these children.

JASON. You must be cheerful. I shall look after them well.

MEDEA. I will be. It is not that I distrust your words,

But a woman is a frail thing, prone to crying.

JASON. But why then should you grieve so much for these  
children?

905

MEDEA. I am their mother. When you prayed that they might  
live

I felt unhappy to think that these things will be.

But come, I have said something of the things I meant

To say to you, and now I will tell you the rest.

Since it is the king's will to banish me from here,—

910

And for me too I know that this is the best thing,

Not to be in your way by living here or in

The king's way, since they think me ill-disposed to them,—

I then am going into exile from this land;

But do you, so that you may have the care of them,

915

Beg Kreon that the children may not be banished.

JASON. I doubt if I'll succeed, but still I'll attempt it.

MEDEA. Then you must tell your wife to beg from her father

That the children may be reprieved from banishment.

JASON. I will, and with her I shall certainly succeed.

920

MEDEA. If she is like the rest of us women, you will.

And I too will take a hand with you in this business,

For I will send her some gifts which are far fairer,

I am sure of it, than those which now are in fashion,

A finely-woven dress and a golden diadem,

925

And the children shall present them. Quick, let one of you  
Servants bring here to me that beautiful dress.

[One of her attendants goes into the house.]

She will be happy not in one way, but in a hundred,

Having so fine a man as you to share her bed,

And with this beautiful dress which Helios of old,  
My father's father, bestowed on his descendants. 930

[*Enter attendant carrying the poisoned dress and diadem.*]

There, children, take these wedding presents in your hands.

Take them to the royal princess, the happy bride,

And give them to her. She will not think little of them.

JASON. No, don't be foolish, and empty your hands of these. 935

Do you think the palace is short of dresses to wear?

Do you think there is no gold there? Keep them, don't give them

Away. If my wife considers me of any value,

She will think more of me than money, I am sure of it.

MEDEA. No, let me have my way. They say the gods themselves 940

Are moved by gifts, and gold does more with men than words.

Hers is the luck, her fortune that which god blesses;

She is young and a princess; but for my children's reprieve

I would give my very life, and not gold only.

Go children, go together to that rich palace,

Be suppliants to the new wife of your father,

My lady, beg her not to let you be banished.

And give her the dress,—for this is of great importance,

That she should take the gift into her hand from yours.

Go, quick as you can. And bring your mother good news 950

By your success of those things which she longs to gain.

[JASON goes out with his attendants, followed by the TUTOR  
and the CHILDREN carrying the poisoned gifts.]

CHOR. Now there is no hope left for the children's lives.

Now there is none. They are walking already to murder.

The bride, poor bride, will accept the curse of the gold,

Will accept the bright diadem.

Around her yellow hair she will set that dress 955

Of death with her own hands.

The grace and the perfume and glow of the golden robe

Will charm her to put them upon her and wear the wreath,

And now her wedding will be with the dead below,

Into such a trap she will fall, 960

Poor thing, into such a fate of death and never

Escape from under that curse.

You too, O wretched bridegroom, making your match with kings,

You do not see that you bring 965

Destruction on your children and on her,

Your wife, a fearful death.

Poor soul, what a fall is yours!

In your grief too I weep, mother of little children,

You who will murder your own, 970

In vengeance for the loss of married love  
Which Jason has betrayed  
As he lives with another wife.

[Enter the TUTOR with the CHILDREN.]

TUTOR. Mistress, I tell you that these children are reprieved,  
And the royal bride has been pleased to take in her hands 975  
Your gifts. In that quarter the children are secure.

But come,

Why do you stand confused when you are fortunate?

Why have you turned round with your cheek away from me?

Are not these words of mine pleasing for you to hear? 980

MEDEA. Oh! I am lost!

TUTOR. That word is not in harmony with my tidings.

MEDEA. I am lost, I am lost!

TUTOR. Am I in ignorance telling you

Of some disaster, and not the good news I thought?

MEDEA. You have told what you have told. I do not blame you 985

TUTOR. Why then this downcast eye, and this weeping of tears?

MEDEA. Oh, I am forced to weep, old man. The gods and I,

I in a kind of madness have contrived all this.

TUTOR. Courage! You too will be brought home by your children.

MEDEA. Ah, before that happens I shall bring others home. 990

TUTOR. Others before you have been parted from their children.

Mortals must bear in resignation their ill luck.

MEDEA. That is what I shall do. But go inside the house,

And do for the children your usual daily work.

[The TUTOR goes into the house. MEDEA turns to her  
CHILDREN.]

O children, O my children, you have a city, 995

You have a home, and you can leave me behind you,

And without your mother you may live there for ever.

But I am going in exile to another land

Before I have seen you happy and taken pleasure in you,

Before I have dressed your brides and made your marriage beds

And held up the torch at the ceremony of wedding. 1001

Oh, what a wretch I am in this my self-willed thought!

What was the purpose, children, for which I reared you?

For all my travail and wearing myself away?

They were sterile, those pains I had in the bearing of you. 1005

O surely once the hopes in you I had, poor me,

Were high ones: you would look after me in old age,

And when I died would deck me well with your own hands;

A thing which all would have done. O but now it is gone,

That lovely thought. For, once I am left without you, 1010

Sad will be the life I'll lead and sorrowful for me.

And you will never see your mother again with  
 Your dear eyes, gone to another mode of living.  
 Why, children, do you look upon me with your eyes?  
 Why do you smile so sweetly that last smile of all? 1015  
 Oh, Oh, what can I do? My spirit has gone from me,  
 Friends, when I saw that bright look in the children's eyes.  
 I cannot bear to do it. I renounce my plans  
 I had before. I'll take my children away from  
 This land. Why should I hurt their father with the pain 1020  
 They feel, and suffer twice as much of pain myself?  
 No, no, I will not do it. I renounce my plans.  
 Ah, what is wrong with me? Do I want to let go  
 My enemies unhurt and be laughed at for it?  
 I must face this thing. Oh, but what a weak woman 1025  
 Even to admit to my mind these soft arguments.  
 Children, go into the house. And he whom law forbids  
 To stand in attendance at my sacrifices,  
 Let him see to it. I shall not mar my handiwork.  
 Oh! Oh! 1030  
 Do not, O my heart, you must not do these things!  
 Poor heart, let them go, have pity upon the children.  
 If they live with you in Athens they will cheer you.  
 No! By Hell's avenging furies it shall not be,—  
 This shall never be, that I should suffer my children 1035  
 To be the prey of my enemies' insolence.  
 Every way is it fixed. The bride will not escape.  
 No, the diadem is now upon her head, and she,  
 The royal princess, is dying in the dress, I know it.  
 But,—for it is the most dreadful of roads for me 1040  
 To tread, and them I shall send on a more dreadful still—  
 I wish to speak to the children.

[*She calls the CHILDREN to her.*]

Come, children, give  
 Me your hands, give your mother your hands to kiss them.  
 O the dear hands, and O how dear are these lips to me, 1045  
 And the generous eyes and the bearing of my children!  
 I wish you happiness, but not here in this world.  
 What is here your father took. O how good to hold you!  
 How delicate the skin, how sweet the breath of children!  
 Go, go! I am no longer able, no longer 1050  
 To look upon you. I am overcome by sorrow.

[*The CHILDREN go into the house.*]

I know indeed what evil I intend to do,  
 But stronger than all my afterthoughts is my fury,  
 Fury that brings upon mortals the greatest evils.

[*She goes out to the right, towards the royal palace.*]

CHOR. Often before

1055

I have gone through more subtle reasons,  
And have come upon questionings greater  
Than a woman should strive to search out.

But we too have a goddess to help us

And accompany us into wisdom.

1060

Not all of us. Still you will find

Among many women a few,

And our sex is not without learning.

This I say, that those who have never

Had children, who know nothing of it,

1065

In happiness have the advantage

Over those who are parents.

The childless, who never discover

Whether children turn out as a good thing

Or as something to cause pain, are spared

1070

Many troubles in lacking this knowledge.

And those who have in their homes

The sweet presence of children, I see that their lives

Are all wasted away by their worries.

First they must think how to bring them up well and

1075

How to leave them something to live on.

And then after this whether all their toil

Is for those who will turn out good or bad,

Is still an unanswered question.

And of one more trouble, the last of all,

1080

That is common to mortals I tell.

For suppose you have found them enough for their living,

Suppose that the children have grown into youth

And have turned out good, still, if God so wills it,

Death will away with your children's bodies,

1085

And carry them off into Hades.

What is our profit, then, that for the sake of

Children the gods should pile upon mortals

After all else

This most terrible grief of all?

1090

[*Enter MEDEA, from the spectators' right.*]

MEDEA. Friends, I can tell you that for long I have waited

For the event. I stare towards the place from where

The news will come. And now, see one of Jason's servants

Is on his way here, and that laboured breath of his

Shows he has tidings for us, and evil tidings.

1095

[*Enter, also from the right, the MESSENGER.*]

MESSENGER. Medea, you who have done such a dreadful thing,

So outrageous, run for your life, take what you can,

A ship to bear you hence or chariot on land.

MEDEA. And what is the reason deserves such flight as this?

MESS. She is dead, only just now, the royal princess, 1100

And Kreon dead too, her father, by your poisons.

MEDEA. The finest words you have spoken. Now and hereafter

I shall count you among my benefactors and friends.

MESS. What! Are you right in the mind? Are you not mad,  
Woman? The house of the king is outraged by you. 1105

Do you enjoy it? Not afraid of such doings?

MEDEA. To what you say I on my side have something too

To say in answer. Do not be in a hurry, friend,

But speak. How did they die? You will delight me twice

As much again if you say they died in agony. 1110

MESS. When those two children, born of you, had entered in,

Their father with them, and passed into the bride's house,

We were pleased, we slaves who were distressed by your wrongs.

All through the house we were talking of but one thing,

How you and your husband had made up your quarrel. 1115

Some kissed the children's hands and some their yellow hair,

And I myself was so full of my joy that I

Followed the children into the women's quarters.

Our mistress, whom we honour now instead of you,

Before she noticed that your two children were there, 1120

Was keeping her eye fixed cagerly on Jason.

Afterwards however she covered up her eyes,

Her cheek paled and she turned herself away from him,

So disgusted was she at the children's coming there.

But your husband tried to end the girl's bad temper, 1125

And said 'You must not look unkindly on your friends.

Cease to be angry. Turn your head to me again.

Have as your friends the same ones as your husband has.

And take these gifts, and beg your father to reprieve

These children from their exile. Do it for my sake.' 1130

She, when she saw the dress, could not restrain herself.

She agreed with all her husband said, and before

He and the children had gone far from the palace,

She took the gorgeous robe and dressed herself in it,

And put the golden crown around her curly locks, 1135

And arranged the set of the hair in a shining mirror,

And smiled at the lifeless image of herself in it.

Then she rose from her chair and walked about the room,

With her gleaming feet stepping most soft and delicate,

All overjoyed with the present. Often and often 1140

She would stretch her foot out straight and look along it.



But after that it was a fearful thing to see.  
 The colour of her face changed, and she staggered back,  
 She ran, and her legs trembled, and she only just  
 Managed to reach a chair without falling flat down. 1145  
 An aged woman servant who, I take it, thought  
 This was some seizure of Pan or another god,  
 Cried out 'God bless us,' but that was before she saw  
 The white foam breaking through her lips and her rolling  
 The pupils of her eyes and her face all bloodless. 1150  
 Then she raised a different cry from that 'God bless us,'  
 A huge shriek, and the women ran, one to the king,  
 One to the newly wedded husband to tell him  
 What had happened to his bride; and with frequent sound  
 The whole of the palace rang as they went running. 1155  
 One walking quickly round the course of a race-track  
 Would now have turned the bend and be close to the goal,  
 When she, poor girl, opened her shut and speechless eye,  
 And with a terrible groan she came to herself.  
 For a two-fold pain was moving up against her. 1160  
 The wreath of gold that was resting around her head  
 Let forth a fearful stream of all-devouring fire,  
 And the finely-woven dress your children gave to her,  
 Was fastening on the unhappy girl's fine flesh.  
 She leapt up from the chair, and all on fire she ran, 1165  
 Shaking her hair now this way and now that, trying  
 To hurl the diadem away; but fixedly  
 The gold preserved its grip, and, when she shook her hair,  
 Then more and twice as fiercely the fire blazed out.  
 Till, beaten by her fate, she fell down to the ground, 1170  
 Hard to be recognised except by a parent.  
 Neither the setting of her eyes was plain to see,  
 Nor the shapeliness of her face. From the top of  
 Her head there oozed out blood and fire mixed together.  
 Like the drops on pine-bark, so the flesh from her bones 1175  
 Dropped away, torn by the hidden fang of the poison.  
 It was a fearful sight; and terror held us all  
 From touching the corpse. We had learned from what had  
 happened.  
 But her wretched father, knowing nothing of the event,  
 Came suddenly to the house, and fell upon the corpse, 1180  
 And at once cried out and folded his arms about her,  
 And kissed her and spoke to her, saying 'O my poor child,

1147. *Pan*: As the god of wild nature he was supposed to be the source of the sudden, apparently causeless terror which solitude in wild

surroundings may produce, and thence of all kinds of sudden madness. (Compare our word "panic".)

What heavenly power has so shamefully destroyed you?  
 And who has set me here like an ancient sepulchre,  
 Deprived of you? O let me die with you, my child! 1185  
 And when he had made an end of his wailing and crying,  
 Then the old man wished to raise himself to his feet;  
 But, as the ivy clings to the twigs of the laurel,  
 So he stuck to the fine dress, and he struggled fearfully.  
 For he was trying to lift himself to his knee, 1190  
 And she was pulling him down, and when he tugged hard  
 He would be ripping his aged flesh from his bones.  
 At last his life was quenched and the unhappy man  
 Gave up the ghost, no longer could hold up his head.  
 There they lie close, the daughter and the old father, 1195  
 Dead bodies, an event he prayed for in his tears.  
 As for your interests, I will say nothing of them,  
 For you will find your own escape from punishment.  
 Our human life I think and have thought a shadow,  
 And I do not fear to say that those who are held 1200  
 Wise amongst men and who search the reasons of things  
 Are those who bring the most sorrow on themselves.  
 For of mortals there is no one who is happy.  
 If wealth flows in upon one, one may be perhaps  
 Luckier than one's neighbour, but still not happy. 1205

[Exit.]

CHOR. Heaven, it seems, on this day has fastened many  
 Evils on Jason, and Jason has deserved them.  
 Poor girl, the daughter of Kreon, how I pity you  
 And your misfortunes, you who have gone quite away  
 To the house of Hades because of marrying Jason. 1210

MEDEA. Women, my task is fixed: as quickly as I may  
 To kill my children, and start away from this land,  
 And not, by wasting time, to suffer my children  
 To be slain by another hand less kindly to them.  
 Force every way will have it they must die, and since 1215  
 This must be so, then I, their mother, shall kill them.  
 O arm yourself in steel, my heart! Do not hang back  
 From doing this fearful and necessary wrong.  
 O come, my hand, poor wretched hand, and take the sword,  
 Take it, step forward to this bitter starting point, 1220  
 And do not be a coward, do not think of them,  
 How sweet they are, and how you are their mother. Just for  
 This one short day be forgetful of your children,  
 Afterwards weep; for even though you will kill them,  
 They were very dear,—O, I am an unhappy woman! 1225  
 [With a cry she rushes into the house.]

CHOR. O Earth, and the far shining  
 Ray of the sun, look down, look down upon  
 This poor lost woman, look, before she raises  
 The hand of murder against her flesh and blood.  
 Yours was the golden birth from which 1230  
 She sprang, and now I fear divine  
 Blood may be shed by men.  
 O heavenly light, hold back her hand,  
 Check her, and drive from out the house  
 The bloody Fury raised by fiends of Hell.

Vain waste, your care of children;  
 Was it in vain you bore the babes you loved,  
 After you passed the inhospitable strait  
 Between the dark blue rocks, Symplegades?  
 O wretched one, how has it come, 1240  
 This heavy anger on your heart,  
 This cruel bloody mind?  
 For God from mortals asks a stern  
 Price for the stain of kindred blood  
 In like disaster falling on their homes. 1245

[A cry from one of the CHILDREN is heard.]

CHOR. Do you hear the cry, do you hear the children's cry?

O you hard heart, O woman fated for evil!

ONE OF THE CHILDREN. [From within] What can I do and how  
 escape my mother's hands?

ANOTHER CHILD. [From within] O my dear brother, I cannot tell.  
 We are lost.

CHOR. Shall I enter the house? O surely I should 1250  
 Defend the children from murder.

A CHILD. [From within] O help us, in God's name, for now we need  
 your help.

Now, now we are close to it. We are trapped by the sword.

CHOR. O your heart must have been made of rock or steel,  
 You who can kill 1255

With your own hand the fruit of your own womb.

Of one alone I have heard, one woman alone

Of those of old who laid her hands on her children,

Ino, sent mad by heaven when the wife of Zeus

Drove her out from her home and made her wander; 1260

And because of the wicked shedding of blood

Of her own children she threw

Herself, poor wretch, into the sea and stepped away

Over the sea-cliff to die with her two children.

What horror more can be? O women's love, 1265

So full of trouble,  
How many evils have you caused already!

[Enter JASON, with attendants.]

JASON. You women, standing close in front of this dwelling,  
Is she, Medea, she who did this dreadful deed,  
Still in the house, or has she run away in flight? 1270  
For she will have to hide herself beneath the earth,  
Or raise herself on wings into the height of air,  
If she wishes to escape the royal vengeance.  
Does she imagine that, having killed our rulers,  
She will herself escape uninjured from this house? 1275  
But I am thinking not so much of her as for  
The children,—her the king's friends will make to suffer  
For what she did. So I have come to save the lives  
Of my boys, in case the royal house should harm them  
While taking vengeance for their mother's wicked deed. 1280

CHOR. O Jason, if you but knew how deeply you are  
Involved in sorrow, you would not have spoken so.

JASON. What is it? That she is planning to kill me also?

CHOR. Your children are dead, and by their own mother's hand.

JASON. What! This is it? O woman, you have destroyed me. 1285

CHOR. You must make up your mind your children are no more.

JASON. Where did she kill them? Was it here or in the house?

CHOR. Open the gates and there you will see them murdered.

JASON. Quick as you can unlock the doors, men, and undo  
The fastenings and let me see this double evil, 1290  
My children dead and her,—O her I will repay.

[His attendants rush to the door. MEDEA appears above the house in a chariot drawn by dragons. She has the dead bodies of the children with her.]

MEDEA. Why do you batter these gates and try to unbar them,  
Seeking the corpses and for me who did the deed?  
You may cease your trouble, and, if you have need of me,  
Speak, if you wish. You will never touch me with your hand, 1295  
Such a chariot has Helios, my father's father,  
Given me to defend me from my enemies.

JASON. You hateful thing, you woman most utterly loathed  
By the gods and me and by all the race of mankind,  
You who have had the heart to raise a sword against 1300  
Your children, you, their mother, and left me childless,—  
You have done this, and do you still look at the sun  
And at the earth, after these most fearful doings?  
I wish you dead. Now I see it plain, though at that time  
I did not, when I took you from your foreign home 1305  
And brought you to a Greek house, you, an evil thing,

A traitress to your father and your native land.  
 The gods hurled the avenging curse of yours on me.  
 For your own brother you slew at your own hearthside,  
 And then came aboard that beautiful ship, the Argo. 1310  
 And that was your beginning. When you were married  
 To me, your husband, and had borne children to me,  
 For the sake of pleasure in the bed you killed them.  
 There is no Greek woman who would have dared such deeds,  
 Out of all those whom I passed over and chose you 1315  
 To marry instead, a bitter destructive match,  
 A monster not a woman, having a nature  
 Wilder than that of Scylla in the Tuscan sea.

Ah! no, not if I had ten thousand words of shame  
 Could I sting you. You are naturally so brazen. 1320  
 Go, worker in evil, stained with your children's blood.

For me remains to cry aloud upon my fate,  
 Who will get no pleasure from my newly-wedded love,  
 And the boys whom I begot and brought up, never  
 Shall I speak to them alive. Oh, my life is over! 1325

MEDEA. Long would be the answer which I might have made to  
 These words of yours, if Zeus the father did not know  
 How I have treated you and what you did to me.

No, it was not to be that you should scorn my love,  
 And pleasantly live your life through, laughing at me; 1330  
 Nor would the princess, nor he who offered the match,  
 Kreon, drive me away without paying for it.

So now you may call me a monster, if you wish,  
 O Scylla housed in the caves of the Tuscan sea.  
 I too, as I had to, have taken hold of your heart. 1335

JASON. You feel the pain yourself. You share in my sorrow.

MEDEA. Yes, and my grief is gain when you cannot mock it.

JASON. O children, what a wicked mother she was to you!

MEDEA. They died from a disease they caught from their father.

JASON. I tell you it was not my hand that destroyed them. 1340

MEDEA. But it was your insolence, and your virgin wedding.

JASON. And just for the sake of that you chose to kill them.

MEDEA. Is love so small a pain, do you think, for a woman?

JASON. For a wise one, certainly. But you are wholly evil.

MEDEA. The children are dead. I say this to make you suffer. 1345

JASON. The children, I think, will bring down curses on you.

MEDEA. The gods know who was the author of this sorrow.

JASON. Yes, the gods know indeed, they know your loathsome heart.

MEDEA. Hate me. But I tire of your barking bitterness.

1318. *Scylla*: a monster located in the straits between Italy and Sicily, who snatched sailors off passing ships and devoured them.

- JASON. And I of yours. It is easier to leave you. 1350
- MEDEA. How then? What shall I do? I long to leave you too.
- JASON. Give me the bodies to bury and to mourn them.
- MEDEA. No, that I will not. I will bury them myself,  
 Bearing them to Hera's temple on the promontory;  
 So that no enemy may evilly treat them 1355  
 By tearing up their grave. In this land of Corinth  
 I shall establish a holy feast and sacrifice  
 Each year for ever to atone for the blood guilt.  
 And I myself go to the land of Erechtheus  
 To dwell in Aigeus' house, the son of Pandion. 1360  
 While you, as is right, will die without distinction,  
 Struck on the head by a piece of the Argo's timber,  
 And you will have seen the bitter end of my love.
- JASON. May a Fury for the children's sake destroy you,  
 And justice, Requitor of blood. 1365
- MEDEA. What heavenly power lends an ear  
 To a breaker of oaths, a deceiver?
- JASON. O, I hate you, murderess of children.
- MEDEA. Go to your palace. Bury your bride.
- JASON. I go, with two children to mourn for. 1370
- MEDEA. Not yet do you feel it. Wait for the future.
- JASON. Oh, children I loved!
- MEDEA. I loved them, you did not.
- JASON. You loved them, and killed them.
- MEDEA. To make you feel  
 pain. 1375
- JASON. Oh, wretch that I am, how I long  
 To kiss the dear lips of my children!
- MEDEA. Now you would speak to them, now you would kiss them.  
 Then you rejected them.
- JASON. Let me, I beg you, 1380  
 Touch my boys' delicate flesh.
- MEDEA. I will not. Your words are all wasted.
- JASON. O God, do you hear it, this persecution,  
 These my sufferings from this hateful  
 Woman, this monster, murderess of children? 1385  
 Still what I can do that I will do:  
 I will lament and cry upon heaven,  
 Calling the gods to bear me witness  
 How you have killed my boys and prevent me from  
 Touching their bodies or giving them burial. 1390  
 I wish I had never begot them to see them

1357. *feast and sacrifice*: Some such ceremony was still performed at Corinth in Euripides' time.

Afterwards slaughtered by you.

CHOR. Zeus in Olympus is the overseer

Of many doings. Many things the gods

Achieve beyond our judgment. What we thought

Is not confirmed and what we thought not god

Contrives. And so it happens in this story..

1395

## PLATO

(429?–347 B.C.)

### The *Apology of Socrates*\*

How you, O Athenians, have been affected by my accusers, I cannot tell; but I know that they almost made me forget who I was—so persuasively did they speak; and yet they have hardly uttered a word of truth. But of the many falsehoods told by them, there was one which quite amazed me;—I mean when they said that you should be upon your guard and not allow yourselves to be deceived by the force of my eloquence. To say this, when they were certain to be detected as soon as I opened my lips and proved myself to be anything but a great speaker, did indeed appear to me most shameless—unless by the force of eloquence they mean the force of truth; for if such is their meaning, I admit that I am eloquent. But in how different a way from theirs! Well, as I was saying, they have scarcely spoken the truth at all; but from me you shall hear the whole truth: not, however, delivered after their manner in a set oration duly ornamented with words and phrases. No, by heaven! but I shall use the words and arguments which occur to me at the moment; for I am confident in the justice of my cause: at my time of life I ought not to be appearing before you, O men of Athens, in the character of a juvenile orator—let no one expect it of me. And I must beg of you to grant me a favour:—If I defend myself in my accustomed manner, and you hear me using the words which I have been in the habit of using in the agora,<sup>1</sup> at the tables of the money-changers, or anywhere else, I would ask you not to be surprised, and not to interrupt me on this account. For I am more than seventy years of age, and appearing now for the first time in a court of law, I am quite a stranger to the language of the place; and therefore I would have you regard me as if I were really a stranger, whom you would excuse if he spoke in his native tongue, and after the fashion of his country:—Am I making an unfair request of you? Never mind the manner, which may or may not be

\* Translated by Benjamin Jowett.  
“Apology” means “defense.”

1. the market place.

good; but think only of the truth of my words, and give heed to that: let the speaker speak truly and the judge decide justly.

And first, I have to reply to the older charges<sup>2</sup> and to my first accusers, and then I will go on to the later ones. For of old I have had many accusers, who have accused me falsely to you during many years; and I am more afraid of them than of Anytus and his associates, who are dangerous, too, in their own way. But far more dangerous are the others, who began when you were children, and took possession of your minds with their falsehoods, telling of one Socrates, a wise man, who speculated about the heaven above, and searched into the earth beneath, and made the worse appear the better cause.<sup>3</sup> The disseminators of this tale are the accusers whom I dread; for their hearers are apt to fancy that such enquirers do not believe in the existence of the gods. And they are many, and their charges against me are of ancient date, and they were made by them in the days when you were more impressible than you are now—in childhood, or it may have been in youth—and the cause when heard went by default, for there was none to answer. And hardest of all, I do not know and cannot tell the names of my accusers; unless in the chance case of a Comic poet.<sup>4</sup> All who from envy and malice have persuaded you—some of them having first convinced themselves—all this class of men are most difficult to deal with; for I cannot have them up here, and cross-examine them, and therefore I must simply fight with shadows in my own defence, and argue when there is no one who answers. I will ask you then to assume with me, as I was saying, that my opponents are of two kinds; one recent, the other ancient: and I hope that you will see the propriety<sup>5</sup> of my answering the latter first, for these accusations you heard long before the others, and much oftener.

Well, then, I must make my defence, and endeavor to clear away in a short time, a slander which has lasted a long time. May I succeed, if to succeed be for my good and yours, or likely to avail me in my cause! The task is not an easy one; I quite understand the

2. Socrates had been the object of much criticism and satire for many years before the trial. He here disregards legal forms and announces that he will deal first with the prejudices that lie behind the formal charge that has been brought against him.

3. He was accused by some of his enemies of being a materialist philosopher who speculated about the physical nature of the universe, and by others of being one of the Sophists, professional teachers of rhetoric and other subjects, many of whom taught methods which were more effective than honest. (See footnotes 7 and 29, on Protagoras and Anaxagoras.)

4. He is referring to the poet Aristophanes, whose play *The Clouds* (produced in 423 B.C.) is a broad satire on Socrates and his associates, and a good example of the prejudice Socrates is dealing with, for it presents him propounding fantastic theories about matter and religion, and teaching students how to avoid payment of debts.

5. He says this with his tongue in his cheek, for he is actually paying no attention to legal propriety. This becomes clearer below, where he goes so far as to paraphrase the actual terms of the indictment and put into the mouths of his accusers the prejudice he claims is the basis of their action.



nature of it. And so leaving the event with God, in obedience to the law I will now make my defence.

I will begin at the beginning, and ask what is the accusation which has given rise to the slander of me, and in fact has encouraged Meletus to prefer this charge against me. Well, what do the slanderers say? They shall be my prosecutors, and I will sum up their words in an affidavit: 'Socrates is an evil-doer, and a curious person, who searches into things under the earth and in heaven, and he makes the worse appear the better cause; and he teaches the aforesaid doctrines to others.' Such is the nature of the accusation: it is just what you have yourselves seen in the comedy of Aristophanes, who has introduced a man whom he calls Socrates, going about and saying that he walks in air,<sup>6</sup> and talking a deal of nonsense concerning matters of which I do not pretend to know either much or little—not that I mean to speak disparagingly of any one who is a student of natural philosophy. I should be very sorry if Meletus could bring so grave a charge against me. But the simple truth is, O Athenians, that I have nothing to do with physical speculations. Very many of those here present are witnesses to the truth of this, and to them I appeal. Speak then, you who have heard me, and tell your neighbours whether any of you have ever known me hold forth in few words or in many upon such matters. . . . You hear their answer. And from what they say of this part of the charge you will be able to judge of the truth of the rest.

As little foundation is there for the report that I am a teacher, and take money;<sup>7</sup> this accusation has no more truth in it than the other. Although, if a man were really able to instruct mankind, to receive money for giving instruction would, in my opinion, be an honour to him. There is Gorgias<sup>8</sup> of Leontium, and Prodicus<sup>9</sup> of Ceos, and Hippias<sup>10</sup> of Elis, who go the round of the cities, and are able to persuade the young men to leave their own citizens by whom they might be taught for nothing, and come to them whom they not only pay, but are thankful if they may be allowed to pay them. There is at this time a Parian<sup>11</sup> philosopher residing in

6. In the comedy of Aristophanes Socrates first appears suspended in a basket, and when asked what he is doing replies, "I walk in air and contemplate the sun." He explains that only by suspending his intelligence can he investigate celestial matters.

7. Unlike Socrates, who beggared himself in the quest for truth, the professional teachers made great fortunes. The wealth of Protagoras, the first of the Sophists who demanded fees, was proverbial.

8. from Leontium in Sicily; he was famous as the originator of an antithetical, ornate prose style which had great influence.

9. from Ceos, an island in the Aegean; he taught rhetoric and was well-known for his pioneering grammatical studies.

10. from Elis, in the Peloponnese; he claimed to be able to teach any and all subjects, including handicrafts.

11. from Paros, a small island in the Aegean.

Athens, of whom I have heard; and I came to hear of him in this way:—I came across a man who has spent a world of money on the Sophists, Callias, the son of Hipponicus, and knowing that he had sons, I asked him: 'Callias,' I said, 'if your two sons were foals or calves, there would be no difficulty in finding some one to put over them; we should hire a trainer of horses, or a farmer probably, who would improve and perfect them in their own proper virtue and excellence; but as they are human beings, whom are you thinking of placing over them? Is there any one who understands human and political virtue? You must have thought about the matter, for you have sons; is there any one?' 'There is,' he said. 'Who is he?' said I; 'and of what country? and what does he charge?' 'Evenus the Parian,' he replied; 'he is the man, and his charge is five minae.'<sup>12</sup> Happy is Evenus, I said to myself; if he really has this wisdom, and teaches at such a moderate charge. Had I the same, I should have been very proud and conceited; but the truth is that I have no knowledge of the kind.

I dare say, Athenians, that some one among you will reply, 'Yes, Socrates, but what is the origin of these accusations which are brought against you; there must have been something strange which you have been doing? All these rumours and this talk about you would never have arisen if you had been like other men: tell us, then, what is the cause of them, for we should be sorry to judge hastily of you.' Now I regard this as a fair challenge, and I will endeavour to explain to you the reason why I am called wise and have such an evil fame. Please to attend then. And although some of you may think that I am joking, I declare that I will tell you the entire truth. Men of Athens, this reputation of mine has come of a certain sort of wisdom which I possess. If you ask me what kind of wisdom, I reply, wisdom such as may perhaps be attained by man, for to that extent I am inclined to believe that I am wise; whereas the persons of whom I was speaking have a superhuman wisdom, which I may fail to describe, because I have it not myself; and he who says that I have, speaks falsely, and is taking away my character. And here, O men of Athens, I must beg you not to interrupt me, even if I seem to say something extravagant. For the word which I will speak is not mine. I will refer you to a witness who is worthy of credit; that witness shall be the God of Delphi<sup>13</sup>—he will tell you about my wisdom, if I have any, and of what sort it is. You must have known Chaerephon;<sup>14</sup> he was early a friend of mine, and also a friend of yours, for he shared in the recent exile of the people,<sup>15</sup> and returned with you. Well, Chaerephon, as you

12. a relatively moderate sum; Protagoras is said to have charged a hundred minae for a course of instruction.

13. the oracle of Apollo at Delphi.

14. one of Socrates' closest associates; he appears in Aristophanes' comedy.

15. Chaerephon was an enthusiastic

know, was very impetuous in all his doings, and he went to Delphi and boldly asked the oracle to tell him whether—as I was saying, I must beg you not to interrupt—he asked the oracle to tell him whether any one was wiser than I was, and the Pythian prophetess answered, that there was no man wiser. Chaerephon is dead himself; but his brother, who is in court, will confirm the truth of what I am saying.

Why do I mention this? Because I am going to explain to you why I have such an evil name. When I heard the answer, I said to myself, What can the god mean? and what is the interpretation of his riddle? for I know that I have no wisdom, small or great. What then can he mean when he says that I am the wisest of men? And yet he is a god, and cannot lie; that would be against his nature. After long consideration, I thought of a method of trying the question. I reflected that if I could only find a man wiser than myself, then I might go to the god with a refutation in my hand. I should say to him, 'Here is a man who is wiser than I am; but you said that I was the wisest.' Accordingly I went to one who had the reputation of wisdom, and observed him—his name I need not mention; he was a politician whom I selected for examination—and the result was as follows: When I began to talk with him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise, although he was thought wise by many, and still wiser by himself; and thereupon I tried to explain to him that he thought himself wise, but was not really wise; and the consequence was that he hated me, and his enmity was shared by several who were present and heard me. So I left him, saying to myself, as I went away: Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is,—for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows; I neither know nor think that I know. In this latter particular, then, I seem to have slightly the advantage of him. Then I went to another who had still higher pretensions to wisdom, and my conclusion was exactly the same. Whereupon I made another enemy of him, and of many others besides him.

Then I went to one man after another, being not unconscious of the enmity which I provoked, and I lamented and feared this: But necessity was laid upon me,—the word of God, I thought, ought to be considered first. And I said to myself, Go I must to all who appear to know, and find out the meaning of the oracle. And I swear to you, Athenians, by the dog I swear!<sup>16</sup>—for I must tell you the truth—the result of my mission was just this: I found that

enough partisan of the democratic regime to have to go into exile in 404 B.C. when the Thirty Tyrants carried on an oligarchic reign of terror. The phrase "the recent exile of the people"

refers to the exile into which all known champions of democracy were forced until the democracy was restored.

16. a euphemistic oath (compare, "by George").

the men most in repute were all but the most foolish; and that others less esteemed were really wiser and better. I will tell you the tale of my wanderings and of the 'Herculean' labours, as I may call them, which I endured only to find at last the oracle irrefutable. After the politicians, I went to the poets; tragic, dithyrambic,<sup>17</sup> and all sorts. And there, I said to myself, you will be instantly detected; now you will find out that you are more ignorant than they are. Accordingly, I took them some of the most elaborate passages in their own writings, and asked what was the meaning of them—thinking that they would teach me something. Will you believe me? I am almost ashamed to confess the truth, but I must say that there is hardly a person present who would not have talked better about their poetry than they did themselves. Then I knew that not by wisdom do poets write poetry, but by a sort of genius and inspiration; they are like diviners or soothsayers who also say many fine things, but do not understand the meaning of them.<sup>18</sup> The poets appeared to me to be much in the same case; and I further observed that upon the strength of their poetry they believed themselves to be the wisest of men in other things in which they were not wise. So I departed, conceiving myself to be superior to them for the same reason that I was superior to the politicians.

At last I went to the artisans, for I was conscious that I knew nothing at all, as I may say, and I was sure that they knew many fine things; and here I was not mistaken, for they did know many things of which I was ignorant, and in this they certainly were wiser than I was. But I observed that even the good artisans fell into the same error as the poets;—because they were good workmen they thought that they also knew all sorts of high matters, and this defect in them overshadowed their wisdom; and therefore I asked myself on behalf of the oracle, whether I would like to be as I was, neither having their knowledge nor their ignorance, or like them in both; and I made answer to myself and to the oracle that I was better off as I was.

This inquisition has led to my having many enemies of the worst and most dangerous kind, and has given occasion also to many calumnies. And I am called wise, for my hearers always imagine that I myself possess the wisdom which I find wanting in others: but the truth is, O men of Athens, that God only is wise; and by his answer he intends to show that the wisdom of men is worth little or nothing; he is not speaking of Socrates, he is only using my name by way of illustration, as if he said, He, O men, is the wisest, who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is in truth worth

17. The dithyramb was a short performance by a chorus, produced, like tragedy, at state expense and at a public festival.

18. For a fuller exposition of this famous theory of poetic inspiration see Plato's *Ion*.

nothing. And so I go about the world, obedient to the god, and search and make enquiry into the wisdom of any one, whether citizen or stranger, who appears to be wise; and if he is not wise, then in vindication of the oracle I show him that he is not wise; and my occupation quite absorbs me, and I have no time to give either to any public matter of interest or to any concern of my own, but I am in utter poverty by reason of my devotion to the god.

There is another thing:—young men of the richer classes, who have not much to do, come about me of their own accord; they like to hear the pretenders examined, and they often imitate me, and proceed to examine others; there are plenty of persons, as they quickly discover, who think that they know something, but really know little or nothing; and then those who are examined by them instead of being angry with themselves are angry with me: This confounded Socrates, they say; this villainous misleader of youth!—and then if somebody asks them, Why, what evil does he practice or teach? they do not know, and cannot tell; but in order that they may not appear to be at a loss, they repeat the ready-made charges which are used against all philosophers about teaching things up in the clouds and under the earth, and having no gods, and making the worse appear the better cause; for they do not like to confess that their pretence of knowledge has been detected—which is the truth; and as they are numerous and ambitious and energetic, and are drawn up in battle array and have persuasive tongues, they have filled your ears with their loud and inveterate calumnies. And this is the reason why my three accusers, Meletus and Anytus and Lycon, have set upon me; Meletus, who has a quarrel with me on behalf of the poets; Anytus, on behalf of the craftsmen and politicians; Lycon,<sup>19</sup> on behalf of the rhetoricians: and as I said at the beginning, I cannot expect to get rid of such a mass of calumny all in a moment. And this, O men of Athens, is the truth and the whole truth; I have concealed nothing, I have dissembled nothing. And yet, I know that my plainness of speech makes them hate me, and what is their hatred but a proof that I am speaking the truth?—Hence has arisen the prejudice against me; and this is the reason of it, as you will find out either in this or in any future enquiry.

I have said enough in my defence against the first class of my accusers; I turn to the second class. They are headed by Meletus, that good man and true lover of his country, as he calls himself. Against these, too, I must try to make a defence:—Let their affidavit be read: it contains something of this kind: It says that Socrates is a doer of evil, who corrupts the youth; and who does not believe in the gods of the state, but has other new divinities<sup>20</sup> of his own.

19. the three accusers. Anytus was a prominent politician; the connection of Meletus with poetry and of Lycon with

rhetoric is known only from this passage.

20. The precise meaning of the

Such is the charge; and now let us examine the particular counts. He says that I am a doer of evil, and corrupt the youth; but I say, O men of Athens, that Meletus is a doer of evil, in that he pretends to be in earnest when he is only in jest, and is so eager to bring men to trial from a pretended zeal and interest about matters in which he really never had the smallest interest. And the truth of this I will endeavour to prove to you.

Come hither, Meletus, and let me ask a question<sup>21</sup> of you. You think a great deal about the improvement of youth?

Yes, I do.

Tell the judges, then, who is their improver; for you must know, as you have taken the pains to discover their corrupter, and are citing and accusing me before them. Speak, then, and tell the judges who their improver is.—Observe, Meletus, that you are silent, and have nothing to say. But is not this rather disgraceful, and a very considerable proof of what I was saying, that you have no interest in the matter? Speak up, friend, and tell us who their improver is.

The laws.

But that, my good sir, is not my meaning. I want to know who the person is, who, in the first place, knows the laws.

The judges,<sup>22</sup> Socrates, who are present in court.

What, do you mean to say, Meletus, that they are able to instruct and improve youth?

Certainly they are.

What, all of them, or some only and not others?

All of them.

By the goddess Herè,<sup>23</sup> that is good news! There are plenty of improvers, then. And what do you say of the audience,—do they improve them?

Yes, they do.

And the senators?<sup>24</sup>

charge is not clear. As this translation indicates, the Greek words may mean "new divinities," with a reference to Socrates' famous inner voice, which from time to time warned him against action on which he had decided. Or the words may mean "practicing strange rites," though this charge is difficult to understand. In any case, the importance of the phrase is that it implies religious belief of some sort and can later be used against Meletus when he loses his head and accuses Socrates of atheism.

21. Socrates avails himself of his right to interrogate the accuser. He is, of course, a master in this type of examination, for he has spent his life in the practice of puncturing inflated pretensions and exposing logical contradictions in the arguments of his adversaries. He is here fulfilling his

earlier promise to defend himself in the manner to which he has been accustomed and use the words which he has been in the habit of using in the agora (p. 297).

22. the jury. There was no judge in the Athenian law court. The Athenian jury was large; in this trial it probably consisted of five hundred citizens. In the following questions Socrates forces Meletus to extend the capacity to improve the youth to successively greater numbers, until it appears that the entire citizen body is a good influence and Socrates the only bad one. Meletus is caught in the trap of his own demagogic appeal.

23. Hera.

24. the members of the standing council of the assembly, five hundred in number.

Yes, the senators improve them.

But perhaps the members of the assembly<sup>25</sup> corrupt them?—or do they too improve them?

They improve them.

Then every Athenian improves and elevates them; all with the exception of myself; and I alone am their corrupter? Is that what you affirm?

That is what I stoutly affirm.

I am very unfortunate if you are right. But suppose I ask you a question: How about horses?<sup>26</sup> Does one man do them harm and all the world good? Is not the exact opposite the truth? One man is able to do them good, or at least not many;—the trainer of horses, that is to say, does them good, and others who have to do with them rather injure them? Is not that true, Meletus, of horses, or any other animals? Most assuredly it is; whether you and Anytus say yes or no. Happy indeed would be the condition of youth if they had one corrupter only, and all the rest of the world were their improvers. But you, Meletus, have sufficiently shown that you never had a thought about the young: your carelessness is seen in your not caring about the very things which you bring against me.

And now, Meletus, I will ask you another question—by Zeus I will: Which is better, to live among bad citizens, or among good ones? Answer, friend, I say; the question is *one* which may be easily answered. Do not the good do their neighbours good, and the bad do them evil?

Certainly.

And is there any one who would rather be injured than benefited by those who live with him? Answer, my good friend, the law requires you to answer—does any one like to be injured?

Certainly not.

And when you accuse me of corrupting and deteriorating the youth, do you allege that I corrupt them intentionally or unintentionally?

Intentionally, I say.

But you have just admitted that the good do their neighbours good, and evil do them evil. Now, is that a truth which your superior wisdom has recognized thus early in life, and am I, at my age, in such darkness and ignorance as not to know that if a man with whom I have to live is corrupted by me, I am very likely to be harmed by him; and yet I corrupt him, and intentionally, too—so you say, although neither I nor any other human being is ever likely to be convinced by you. But either I do not corrupt them, or I

25. the sovereign body in the Athenian constitution, theoretically an assembly of the whole citizen body.

26. This simple analogy is typical of the Socratic method; he is still defending himself in his accustomed manner.

corrupt them unintentionally; and on either view of the case you lie. If my offence is unintentional, the law has no cognizance of unintentional offences: you ought to have taken me privately, and warned and admonished me; for if I had been better advised, I should have left off doing what I only did unintentionally—no doubt I should; but you would have nothing to say to me and refused to teach me. And now you bring me up in this court, which is not a place of instruction, but of punishment.

It will be very clear to you, Athenians, as I was saying, that Meletus has no care at all, great or small, about the matter. But still I should like to know, Meletus, in what I am affirmed to corrupt the young. I suppose you mean, as I infer from your indictment, that I teach them not to acknowledge the gods which the state acknowledges, but some other new divinities or spiritual agencies in their stead. These are the lessons by which I corrupt the youth, as you say.

Yes, that I say emphatically.

Then, by the gods, Meletus, of whom we are speaking, tell me and the court, in somewhat plainer terms, what you mean! for I do not as yet understand whether you affirm that I teach other men to acknowledge some gods, and therefore that I do believe in gods, and am not an entire atheist—this you do not lay to my charge,—but only you say that they are not the same gods which the city recognizes—the charge is that they are different gods. Or, do you mean that I am an atheist simply, and a teacher of atheism?

I mean the latter—that you are a complete atheist.<sup>27</sup>

What an extraordinary statement! Why do you think so, Meletus? Do you mean that I do not believe in the godhead of the sun or moon, like other men?

I assure you, judges, that he does not: for he says that the sun is stone, and the moon earth.<sup>28</sup>

Friend Meletus, you think that you are accusing Anaxagoras: and you have but a bad opinion of the judges, if you fancy them illiterate to such a degree as not to know that these doctrines are found in the books of Anaxagoras<sup>29</sup> the Clazomenian, which are full of them. And so, forsooth, the youth are said to be taught them by Socrates, when there are not unfrequently exhibitions of them at the theatre<sup>30</sup> (price of admission one drachma at the most); and

27. Meletus jumps at the most damaging charge, and falls into the trap.

28. Meletus falls back on the old prejudices which Socrates claims are the real indictment against him.

29. a fifth-century philosopher from Clazomenae in Asia Minor. He was an intimate friend of Pericles, but this did not save him from indictment for impiety. He was condemned, and forced to

leave Athens. He is famous for his doctrine that matter was set in motion and ordered by Intelligence (Nous), which, however, did not create it. He also declared that the sun was a mass of red-hot metal larger than the Peloponnese, and that there were hills and ravines on the moon.

30. I.e., the doctrines of Anaxagoras are reflected in the works of the tragic



they might pay their money, and laugh at Socrates if he pretends to father these extraordinary views. And so, Meletus, you really think that I do not believe in any god?

I swear by Zeus that you believe absolutely in none at all.

Nobody will believe you, Meletus, and I am pretty sure that you do not believe yourself. I cannot help thinking, men of Athens, that Meletus is reckless and impudent, and that he has written this indictment in a spirit of mere wantonness and youthful bravado. Has he not compounded a riddle, thinking to try me? He said to himself:—I shall see whether the wise Socrates will discover my facetious contradiction, or whether I shall be able to deceive him and the rest of them. For he certainly does appear to me to contradict himself in the indictment as much as if he said that Socrates is guilty of not believing in the gods, and yet of believing in them—but this is not like a person who is in earnest.

I should like you, O men of Athens, to join me in examining what I conceive to be his inconsistency; and do you, Meletus, answer. And I must remind the audience of my request that they would not make a disturbance<sup>31</sup> if I speak in my accustomed manner:

Did ever man, Meletus, believe in the existence of human things, and not of human beings? . . . I wish, men of Athens, that he would answer, and not be always trying to get up an interruption. Did ever any man believe in horsemanship, and not in horses? or in flute-playing, and not in flute-players? No, my friend; I will answer to you and to the court, as you refuse to answer for yourself. There is no man who ever did. But now please to answer the next question: Can a man believe in spiritual and divine agencies, and not in spirits or demigods?

He cannot.

How lucky I am to have extracted that answer, by the assistance of the court! But then you swear in the indictment that I teach and believe in divine or spiritual agencies (new or old, no matter for that); at any rate, I believe in spiritual agencies,—so you say and swear in the affidavit; and yet if I believe in divine beings, how can I help believing in spirits or demigods;—must I not? To be sure I must; and therefore I may assume that your silence gives consent. Now what are spirits or demigods? are they not either gods or the sons of gods?

Certainly they are.

But this is what I call the facetious riddle invented by you: the

poets; or the words may mean simply that Anaxagoras' book was on sale at the theater.

31. The disturbance is presumably due to the frustration of the enemies of

Socrates, who see him assuming complete control of the proceedings and turning them into a street-corner argument of the type in which he is invincible.

demigods or spirits are gods, and you say first that I do not believe in gods, and then again that I do believe in gods; that is, if I believe in demigods. For if the demigods are the illegitimate sons of gods, whether by the nymphs or by any other mothers, of whom they are said to be the sons—what human being will ever believe that there are no gods if they are the sons of gods? You might as well affirm the existence of mules, and deny that of horses and asses. Such nonsense, Meletus, could only have been intended by you to make trial of me. You have put this into the indictment because you had nothing real of which to accuse me. But no one who has a particle of understanding will ever be convinced by you that the same men can believe in divine and superhuman things, and yet not believe that there are gods and demigods and heroes.

I have said enough in answer to the charge of Meletus: any elaborate defence is unnecessary; but I know only too well how many are the enmities which I have incurred, and this is what will be my destruction if I am destroyed;—not Meletus, nor yet Anytus, but the envy and detraction of the world, which has been the death of many good men, and will probably be the death of many more; there is no danger of my being the last of them.

Some one will say: And are you not ashamed, Socrates, of a course of life which is likely to bring you to an untimely end? To him I may fairly answer: There you are mistaken: a man who is good for anything ought not to calculate the chance of living or dying; he ought only to consider whether in doing anything he is doing right or wrong—acting the part of a good man or of a bad. Whereas, upon your view, the heroes who fell at Troy were not good for much, and the son of Thetis<sup>32</sup> above all, who altogether despised danger in comparison with disgrace; and when he was so eager to slay Hector, his goddess mother said to him, that if he avenged his companion Patroclus, and slew Hector, he would die himself—‘Fate,’ she said, in these or the like words, ‘waits for you next after Hector;’ he, receiving this warning, utterly despised danger and death, and instead of fearing them, feared rather to live in dishonour, and not to avenge his friend. ‘Let me die forthwith,’ he replies, ‘and be avenged of my enemy, rather than abide here by the beaked ships, a laughing-stock and a burden of the earth.’ Had Achilles any thought of death and danger? For wherever a man’s place is, whether the place which he has chosen or that in which he has been placed by a commander, there he ought to remain in hour of danger; he should not think of death or of anything but of disgrace. And this, O men of Athens, is a true saying.

Strange, indeed, would be my conduct, O men of Athens, if I who, when I was ordered by the generals whom you chose to com-

32. Achilles. See the *Iliad*, Book XVIII, ll. 94 ff.

mand me at Potidaea and Amphipolis and Delium,<sup>33</sup> remained where they placed me, like any other man, facing death—if now, when, as I conceive and imagine, God orders me to fulfil the philosopher's mission of searching into myself and other men, I were to desert my post through fear of death, or any other fear; that would indeed be strange, and I might justly be arraigned in court for denying the existence of the gods, if I disobeyed the oracle because I was afraid of death, fancying that I was wise when I was not wise. For the fear of death is indeed the pretence of wisdom, and not real wisdom, being a pretence of knowing the unknown; and no one knows whether death, which men in their fear apprehend to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good. Is not this ignorance of a disgraceful sort, the ignorance which is the conceit that man knows what he does not know? And in this respect only I believe myself to differ from men in general, and may perhaps claim to be wiser than they are:—that whereas I know but little of the world below,<sup>34</sup> I do not suppose that I know: but I do know that injustice and disobedience to a better, whether God or man, is evil and dishonourable, and I will never fear or avoid a possible good rather than a certain evil. And therefore if you let me go now, and are not convinced by Anytus, who said that since I had been prosecuted I must be put to death (or if not that I ought never to have been prosecuted at all); and that if I escape now, your sons will all be utterly ruined by listening to my words—if you say to me, Socrates, this time we will not mind Anytus, and you shall be let off, but upon one condition, that you are not to enquire and speculate in this way any more, and that if you are caught doing so again you shall die:—if this was the condition on which you let me go, I should reply: Men of Athens, I honour and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy, exhorting any one whom I meet and saying to him after my manner: You, my friend,—a citizen of the great and mighty and wise city of Athens,—are you not ashamed of heaping up the greatest amount of money and honour and reputation, and caring so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul, which you never regard or heed at all? And if the person with whom I am arguing, says: Yes, but I do care; then I do not leave him or let him go at once; but I proceed to interrogate and examine and cross-examine him, and if I think that he has no virtue in him, but only

33. three of the battles in the Peloponnesian War in which Socrates had fought as an infantryman. The battle at Potidaea (in northern Greece) occurred in 432 B.C. (For a fuller account of Socrates' conduct there see Plato's *Symposium*.) The date of the battle at

Amphipolis (in northern Greece) is uncertain. The battle at Delium (in central Greece) took place in 424 B.C.

34. the next world. The dead were supposed to carry on a sort of existence below the earth.

says that he has, I reproach him with undervaluing the greater, and overvaluing the less. And I shall repeat the same words to every one whom I meet, young and old, citizen and alien, but especially to the citizens, inasmuch as they are my brethren. For know that this is the command of God; and I believe that no greater good has ever happened in the state than my service to the God. For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul. I tell you that virtue is not given by money, but that from virtue comes money and every other good of man, public as well as private. This is my teaching, and if this is the doctrine which corrupts the youth, I am a mischievous person. But if any one says that this is not my teaching, he is speaking an untruth. Wherefore, O men of Athens, I say to you, do as Anytus bids or not as Anytus bids, and either acquit me or not; but whichever you do, understand that I shall never alter my ways, not even if I have to die many times.

Men of Athens, do not interrupt,<sup>35</sup> but hear me; there was an understanding between us that you should hear me to the end: I have something more to say, at which you may be inclined to cry out; but I believe that to hear me will be good for you, and therefore I beg that you will not cry out. I would have you know, that if you kill such an one as I am, you will injure yourselves more than you will injure me. Nothing will injure me, not Melctus nor yet Anytus—they cannot, for a bad man is not permitted to injure a better than himself. I do not deny that Anytus may, perhaps, kill him, or drive him into exile, or deprive him of civil rights; and he may imagine, and others may imagine, that he is inflicting a great injury upon him: but there I do not agree. For the evil of doing as he is doing—the evil of unjustly taking away the life of another—is greater far.

And now, Athenians, I am not going to argue for my own sake, as you may think, but for yours, that you may not sin against the God by condemning me, who am his gift to you. For if you kill me you will not easily find a successor to me, who, if I may use such a ludicrous figure of speech, am a sort of gadfly, given to the state by God; and the state is a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions owing to his very size, and requires to be stirred into life. I am that gadfly which God has attached to the state, and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you. You will not easily find another like me, and therefore I would advise you to spare me. I dare say that you may feel out of temper (like a person who is suddenly

35. The disturbance this time is presumably more general, for Socrates is defying the court and the people.

awakened from sleep), and you think that you might easily strike me dead as Anytus advises, and then you would sleep on for the remainder of your lives, unless God in his care of you sent you another gadfly. When I say that I am given to you by God, the proof of my mission is this:—if I had been like other men, I should not have neglected all my own concerns or patiently seen the neglect of them during all these years, and have been doing yours, coming to you individually like a father or elder brother, exhorting you to regard virtue; such conduct, I say, would be unlike human nature. If I had gained anything, or if my exhortations had been paid, there would have been some sense in my doing so; but now, as you will perceive, not even the impudence of my accusers dares to say that I have ever exacted or sought pay of any one; of that they have no witness. And I have a sufficient witness to the truth of what I say—my poverty.

Some one may wonder why I go about in private giving advice and busying myself with the concerns of others, but do not venture to come forward in public and advise the state. I will tell you why. You have heard me speak at sundry times and in divers places of an oracle or sign which comes to me, and is the divinity which Meletus ridicules in the indictment. This sign, which is a kind of voice, first began to come to me when I was a child; it always forbids but never commands me to do anything which I am going to do. This is what deters me from being a politician. And rightly, as I think. For I am certain, O men of Athens, that if I had engaged in politics, I should have perished long ago, and done no good either to you or to myself. And do not be offended at my telling you the truth: for the truth is, that no man who goes to war with you or any other multitude, honestly striving against the many lawless and unrighteous deeds which are done in a state, will save his life; he who will fight for the right, if he would live even for a brief space, must have a private station and not a public one.

I can give you convincing evidence of what I say, not words only, but what you value far more—actions. Let me relate to you a passage of my own life which will prove to you that I should never have yielded to injustice from any fear of death, and that ‘as I should have refused to yield’ I must have died at once. I will tell you a tale of the courts, not very interesting perhaps, but nevertheless true. The only office of state which I ever held, O men of Athens, was that of senator:<sup>36</sup> the tribe Antiochis,<sup>37</sup> which is my tribe, had the

36. The Council of the Five Hundred consisted of fifty members of each of the ten tribes into which the population was divided. Each tribal delegation acted as a standing committee of the whole body for a part of the year. The members of this standing committee were called Prytanes. In acting as a

member of the council Socrates was not “engaging in politics” but simply fulfilling his duty as a citizen when called upon.

37. Socrates’ tribe, like the other nine, was named after a mythical hero, in this case Antiochus.

presidency at the trial of the generals who had not taken up the bodies of the slain after the battle of Arginusae;<sup>38</sup> and you proposed to try them in a body, contrary to law, as you all thought afterwards; but at the time I was the only one of the Prytanes who was opposed to the illegality, and I gave my vote against you; and when the orators threatened to impeach and arrest me, and you called and shouted, I made up my mind that I would run the risk, having law and justice with me, rather than take part in your injustice because I feared imprisonment and death. This happened in the days of the democracy.<sup>39</sup> But when the oligarchy of the Thirty<sup>40</sup> was in power, they sent for me and four others into the rotunda,<sup>41</sup> and bade us bring Leon the Salaminian from Salamis,<sup>42</sup> as they wanted to put him to death. This was a specimen of the sort of commands which they were always giving with the view of implicating as many as possible in their crimes; and then I showed, not in word only but in deed, that, if I may be allowed to use such an expression, I cared not a straw for death, and that my great and only care was lest I should do an unrighteous or unholy thing. For the strong arm of that oppressive power did not frighten me into doing wrong; and when we came out of the rotunda the other four went to Salamis and fetched Leon, but I went quietly home. For which I might have lost my life, had not the power of the Thirty shortly afterwards come to an end. And many will witness to my words.

Now do you really imagine that I could have survived all these years, if I had led a public life, supposing that like a good man I had always maintained the right and had made justice, as I ought, the first thing? No indeed, men of Athens, neither I nor any other man. But I have been always the same in all my actions, public as well as private, and never have I yielded any base compliance to those who are slanderously termed my disciples, or to any other. Not that I have any regular disciples. But if any one likes to come and hear me while I am pursuing my mission, whether he be young or old, he is not excluded. Nor do I converse only with those who pay; but any one, whether he be rich or poor, may ask and answer me and listen

38. an Athenian naval victory over Sparta, in 406 B.C. The Athenian commanders failed to pick up the bodies of a large number of Athenians whose ships had been destroyed. Whether they were prevented from doing so by the wind or simply neglected this duty in the excitement of victory is not known; in any case, the Athenian population suspected the worst and put all ten generals on trial, not in a court of law but before the assembly. The generals were tried not individually, but in a group, and condemned to death. The six who had returned to Athens were executed, among them a son of Pericles.

39. Socrates gives two instances of his political actions, one under the democracy and one under the Thirty Tyrants. In both cases, he was in opposition to the government.

40. In 404 B.C., with Spartan backing, the Thirty Tyrants (as they were known to their enemies) ruled for eight months over a defeated Athens. Prominent among them was Critias, who had been one of the rich young men who listened eagerly to Socrates.

41. the circular building in which the Prytanes held their meetings.

42. Athenian territory, an island off Piraeus, the port of Athens.

to my words; and whether he turns out to be a bad man or a good one, neither result can be justly imputed to me; for I never taught or professed to teach him anything. And if any one says that he has ever learned or heard anything from me in private which all the world has not heard, let me tell you that he is lying.

But I shall be asked, Why do people delight in continually conversing with you? I have told you already, Athenians, the whole truth about this matter: they like to hear the cross-examination of the pretenders to wisdom; there is amusement in it. Now this duty of cross-examining other men has been imposed upon me by God; and has been signified to me by oracles, visions, and in every way in which the will of divine power was ever intimated to any one. This is true, O Athenians; or, if not true, would be soon refuted. If I am or have been corrupting the youth, those of them who are now grown up and become sensible that I gave them bad advice in the days of their youth should come forward as accusers, and take their revenge; or if they do not like to come themselves, some of their relatives, fathers, brothers, or other kinsmen, should say what evil their families have suffered at my hands. Now is their time. Many of them I see in the court. There is Crito,<sup>43</sup> who is of the same age and of the same deme<sup>44</sup> with myself, and there is Critobulus his son, whom I also see. Then again there is Lysanias of Sphettus, who is the father of Aeschines—he is present; and also there is Antiphon of Cephissus, who is the father of Epigenes; and there are the brothers of several who have associated with me. There is Nicostratus the son of Theodotides, and the brother of Theodotus (now Theodotus himself is dead, and therefore he, at any rate, will not seek to stop him); and there is Paralus the son of Demodocus, who had a brother Theages; and Adeimantus the son of Ariston, whose brother Plato<sup>45</sup> is present; and Acantodorus, who is the brother of Apollodorus, whom I also see. I might mention a great many others, some of whom Meletus should have produced as witnesses in the course of his speech; and let him still produce them, if he has forgotten—I will make way for him. And let him say, if he has any testimony of the sort which he can produce. Nay, Athenians, the very opposite is the truth. For all these are ready to witness on behalf of the corrupter, of the injurer of their kindred, as Meletus and Anytus call me; not the corrupted youth only—there might have been a motive for that—but their uncorrupted elder relatives. Why should they too support me with their testimony? Why, indeed, except for the sake of truth and justice, and because they know that I am speaking the truth, and that Meletus is a liar.

Well, Athenians, this and the like of this is all the defence which

43. a friend of Socrates who later tried to persuade him to escape from prison.

44. precinct; the local unit of Athenian administration.

45. the writer of the *Apology*.

I have to offer. Yet a word more. Perhaps there may be some one who is offended at me, when he calls to mind how he himself on a similar, or even a less serious occasion, prayed and entreated the judges with many tears, and how he produced his children in court, which was a moving spectacle, together with a host of relations and friends;<sup>46</sup> whereas I, who am probably in danger of my life, will do none of these things. The contrast may occur to his mind, and he may be set against me, and vote in anger because he is displeased at me on this account. Now if there be such a person among you,—mind, I do not say that there is,—to him I may fairly reply: My friend, I am a man, and like other men, a creature of flesh and blood, and not ‘of wood or stone,’ as Homer says;<sup>47</sup> and I have a family, yes, and sons, O Athenians, three in number, one almost a man, and two others who are still young; and yet I will not bring any of them hither in order to petition you for an acquittal. And why not? Not from any self-assertion or want of respect for you. Whether I am or am not afraid of death is another question, of which I will not now speak. But, having regard to public opinion, I feel that such conduct would be discreditable to myself, and to you, and to the whole state. One who has reached my years, and who has a name for wisdom, ought not to demean himself. Whether this opinion of me be deserved or not, at any rate the world has decided that Socrates is in some way superior to other men. And if those among you who are said to be superior in wisdom and courage, and any other virtue, demean themselves in this way, how shameful is their conduct! I have seen men of reputation, when they have been condemned, behaving in the strangest manner: they seemed to fancy that they were going to suffer something dreadful if they died, and that they could be immortal if you only allowed them to live; and I think that such are a dishonour to the state, and that any stranger coming in would have said of them that the most eminent men of Athens, to whom the Athenians themselves give honour and command, are no better than women. And I say that these things ought not to be done by those of us who have a reputation; and if they are done, you ought not to permit them; you ought rather to show that you are far more disposed to condemn the man who gets up a doleful scene and makes the city ridiculous, than him who holds his peace.

But, setting aside the question of public opinion, there seems to be something wrong in asking a favour of a judge, and thus procuring an acquittal, instead of informing and convincing him. For his

46. The accepted ending of the speech for the defense was an unrestrained appeal to the pity of the jury. Socrates' refusal to make it is another shock for the prejudices of the audience.

47. In the *Odyssey*, Book XIX, ll.

162–163, Penelope says to her husband Odysseus (who is disguised as a beggar), “Tell me of your family and where you come from. For you did not spring from an oak or a rock, as the old saying goes.”



duty is, not to make a present of justice, but to give judgment; and he has sworn that he will judge according to the laws, and not according to his own good pleasure; and we ought not to encourage you, nor should you allow yourself to be encouraged, in this habit of perjury—there can be no piety in that. Do not then require me to do what I consider dishonourable and impious and wrong, especially now, when I am being tried for impiety on the indictment of Meletus. For if, O men of Athens, by force of persuasion and entreaty I could overpower your oaths, then I should be teaching you to believe that there are no gods, and in defending should simply convict myself of the charge of not believing in them. But that is not so—far otherwise. For I do believe that there are gods, and in a sense higher than that in which any of my accusers believe in them. And to you and to God I commit my cause, to be determined by you as is best for you and me.<sup>48</sup>

There are many reasons why I am not grieved, O men of Athens, at the vote of condemnation. I expected it, and am only surprised that the votes are so nearly equal; for I had thought that the majority against me would have been far larger; but now, had thirty votes gone over to the other side, I should have been acquitted. And I may say, I think, that I have escaped Meletus. I may say more; for without the assistance of Anytus and Lycon, any one may see that he would not have had a fifth part of the votes,<sup>49</sup> as the law requires, in which case he would have incurred a fine of a thousand drachmae.

And so he proposes death as the penalty. And what shall I propose on my part, O men of Athens? Clearly that which is my due. And what is my due? What return shall be made to the man who has never had the wit to be idle during his whole life; but has been careless of what the many care for—wealth, and family interests, and military offices, and speaking in the assembly, and magistracies, and plots, and parties. Reflecting that I was really too honest a man to be a politician and live, I did not go where I could do no good to you or to myself; but where I could do the greatest good privately to every one of you, thither I went, and sought to persuade every man among you that he must look to himself, and seek virtue and wisdom before he looks to his private interests, and look to the state before he looks to the interests of the state; and that this

48. The jury reaches a verdict of guilty. It appears from what Socrates says later that the jury was split, 280 for this verdict and 220 against it. The penalty is to be settled by the jury's choice between the penalty proposed by the prosecution and that offered by the defense. The jury itself cannot propose a penalty. Meletus demands death. Socrates must propose the lightest sentence he thinks he can get away with, but one

heavy enough to satisfy the majority of the jury who voted him guilty. The prosecution probably expects him to propose exile from Athens, but Socrates surprises them.

49. Socrates jokingly divides the votes against him into three parts, one for each of his three accusers, and points out that Meletus' votes fall below the minimum necessary to justify the trial.

should be the order which he observes in all his actions. What shall be done to such an one? Doubtless some good thing, O men of Athens, if he has his reward; and the good should be of a kind suitable to him. What would be a reward suitable to a poor man who is your benefactor, and who desires leisure that he may instruct you? There can be no reward so fitting as maintenance in the Prytaneum,<sup>50</sup> O men of Athens, a reward which he deserves far more than the citizen who has won the prize at Olympia in the horse or chariot race, whether the chariots were drawn by two horses or by many. For I am in want, and he has enough; and he only gives you the appearance of happiness, and I give you the reality. And if I am to estimate the penalty fairly, I should say that maintenance in the Prytaneum is the just return.

Perhaps you think that I am braving you in what I am saying now, as in what I said before about the tears and prayers. But this is not so. I speak rather because I am convinced that I never intentionally wronged any one, although I cannot convince you—the time has been too short; if there were a law at Athens, as there is in other cities, that a capital cause should not be decided in one day,<sup>51</sup> then I believe that I should have convinced you. But I cannot in a moment refute great slander; and, as I am convinced that I never wronged another, I will assuredly not wrong myself. I will not say of myself that I deserve any evil, or propose any penalty. Why should I? Because I am afraid of the penalty of death which Meletus proposes? When I do not know whether death is a good or an evil, why should I propose a penalty which would certainly be an evil? Shall I say imprisonment? And why should I live in prison, and be the slave of the magistrates of the year—of the Eleven?<sup>52</sup> Or shall the penalty be a fine, and imprisonment until the fine is paid? There is the same objection. I should have to lie in prison, for money I have none, and cannot pay. And if I say exile (and this may possibly be the penalty which you will affix), I must indeed be blinded by the love of life, if I am so irrational as to expect that when you, who are my own citizens, cannot endure my discourses and words, and have found them so grievous and odious that you will have no more of them, others are likely to endure me. No indeed, men of Athens, that is not very likely. And what a life should I lead, at my age, wandering from city to city, ever changing my place of exile, and always being driven out! For I am quite sure that wherever I go, there, as here, the young men will flock to me; and if I drive them away, their elders will drive me out at their request; and if I

50. the place in which the Prytanes, as representatives of the city, entertained distinguished visitors and winners at the athletic contests at Olympia.

51. There was such a law in Sparta.  
52. a committee which had charge of prisons and of public executions.

let them come, their fathers and friends will drive me out for their sakes.

Some one will say: Yes, Socrates, but cannot you hold your tongue, and then you may go into a foreign city, and no one will interfere with you? Now I have great difficulty in making you understand my answer to this. For if I tell you that to do as you say would be a disobedience to the God, and therefore that I cannot hold my tongue, you will not believe that I am serious; and if I say again that daily to discourse about virtue, and of those other things about which you hear me examining myself and others, is the greatest good of man, and that the unexamined life is not worth living, you are still less likely to believe me. Yet I say what is true, although a thing of which it is hard for me to persuade you. Also, I have never been accustomed to think that I deserve to suffer any harm. Had I money I might have estimated the offence at what I was able to pay, and not have been much the worse. But I have none, and therefore I must ask you to proportion the fine to my means. Well, perhaps I could afford a mina,<sup>53</sup> and therefore I propose that penalty: Plato, Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus, my friends here, bid me say thirty minae, and they will be the surties. Let thirty minae be the penalty; for which sum they will be ample security to you.<sup>54</sup>

Not much time will be gained, O Athenians, in return for the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the city, who will say that you killed Socrates, a wise man; for they will call me wise, even although I am not wise, when they want to reproach you. If you had waited a little while, your desire would have been fulfilled in the course of nature. For I am far advanced in years, as you may perceive, and not far from death. I am speaking now not to all of you, but only to those who have condemned me to death. And I have another thing to say to them: You think that I was convicted because I had no words of the sort which would have procured my acquittal—I mean, if I had thought fit to leave nothing undone or unsaid. Not so; the deficiency which led to my conviction was not of words—certainly not. But I had not the boldness or impudence or inclination to address you as you would have liked me to do, weeping and wailing and lamenting, and saying and doing many things which you have been accustomed to hear from others, and

53. It is almost impossible to express the value of ancient money in modern terms. A mina was a considerable sum; in Aristotle's time (fourth century B.C.) one mina was recognized as a fair ransom for a prisoner of war.

54. The jury decides for death (according to a much later source, the vote this time was 300 to 200). The decision is not surprising in view of Socrates' intransigence. Socrates now makes a final statement to the court.

which, as I maintain, are unworthy of me. I thought at the time that I ought not to do anything common or mean when in danger: nor do I now repent of the style of my defence; I would rather die having spoken after my manner, than speak in your manner and live. For neither in war nor yet at law ought I or any man to use every way of escaping death. Often in battle there can be no doubt that if a man will throw away his arms, and fall on his knees before his pursuers, he may escape death; and in other dangers there are other ways of escaping death, if a man is willing to say and do anything. The difficulty, my friends, is not to avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death. I am old and move slowly, and the slower runner has overtaken me, and my accusers are keen and quick, and the faster runner, who is unrighteousness, has overtaken them. And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death,—they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong; and I must abide by my award—let them abide by theirs. I suppose that these things may be regarded as fated,—and I think that they are well.

And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you; for I am about to die, and in the hour of death men are gifted with prophetic power.<sup>55</sup> And I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my departure punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not to give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose: far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now;<sup>56</sup> accusers whom hitherto I have restrained: and as they are younger they will be more inconsiderate with you, and you will be more offended at them. If you think that by killing men you can prevent some one from censuring your evil lives, you are mistaken; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honourable; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be disabling others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure to the judges who have condemned me.

Friends, who would have acquitted me, I would like also to talk with you about the thing which has come to pass, while the magistrates are busy, and before I go to the place at which I must die. Stay then a little, for we may as well talk with one another while there is time. You are my friends, and I should like to show you

55. as the dying Hector foretells the death of Achilles; see the *Iliad*, Book XXII, ll. 355–360.

56. Socrates' prophecy was fulfilled, for all of the many different philo-

sophical schools of the early fourth century claimed descent from Socrates and developed one or another aspect of his teachings.

the meaning of this event which has happened to me. O my judges—for you I may truly call judges—I should like to tell you of a wonderful circumstance. Hitherto the divine faculty of which the internal oracle is the source has constantly been in the habit of opposing me even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error in any matter; and now as you see there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be, the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition, either when I was leaving my house in the morning, or when I was on my way to the court, or while I was speaking, at anything which I was going to say; and yet I have often been stopped in the middle of a speech, but now in nothing I either said or did touching the matter in hand has the oracle opposed me. What do I take to be the explanation of this silence? I will tell you. It is an intimation that what has happened to me is a good, and that those of us who think that death is an evil are in error. For the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good.

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things—either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is **no** consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now if death be of such a nature, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead abide, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this? If indeed when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world, and finds the true judges who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus and Triptolemus,<sup>57</sup> and other sons of God who were righteous in their own life, that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and

57. Minos appears as a judge of the dead in Homer's *Odyssey*, Book XI; Rhadamanthus and Aeacus, like Minos, were models of just judges in life and after death; Triptolemus, the mythical

inventor of agriculture, is associated with judgment in the next world only in this passage. The first three are sons of Zeus.

Musaeus<sup>58</sup> and Hesiod<sup>59</sup> and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I myself, too, shall have a wonderful interest in there meeting and conversing with Palamedes, and Ajax<sup>60</sup> the son of Telamon, and any other ancient hero who has suffered death through an unjust judgment; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own sufferings with theirs. Above all, I shall then be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge; as in this world, so also in the next and I shall find out who is wise, and who pretends to be wise, and is not. What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great Trojan expedition; or Odysseus or Sisyphus,<sup>61</sup> or numberless others, men and women too! What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions! In another world they do not put a man to death for asking questions: assuredly not. For besides being happier than we are, they will be immortal, if what is said is true.

Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that the time had arrived when it was better for me to die and be released from trouble; wherefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason, also, I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them.

Still I have a favour to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing,—then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows.

58. legendary poets and religious teachers.

59. early Greek poet (eighth century B.C.?) who wrote *The Works and Days*, a didactic poem containing precepts for the farmer.

60. both victims of unjust trials. Palamedes, one of the Greek chieftains at Troy, was unjustly executed for treason on the false evidence of his enemy Odysseus, and Ajax committed

suicide after the arms of the dead Achilles were adjudged to his enemy Odysseus as the bravest warrior on the Greek side.

61. Odysseus was the most cunning of the Greek chieftains at Troy, the hero of Homer's *Odyssey*; Sisyphus was famous for his unscrupulousness and cunning. Each is presumably an example of the man who "pretends to be wise, and is not."

## Crito\*

*Persons of the Dialogue*

SOCRATES

CRITO

SCENE—*The prison of Socrates.*

SOCRATES. Why have you come at this hour, Crito?<sup>1</sup> It must be quite early?

CRITO. Yes, certainly.

SOC. What is the exact time?

CR. The dawn is breaking.

SOC. I wonder that the keeper of the prison would let you in.

CR. He knows me, because I often come, Socrates; moreover, I have done him a kindness.

SOC. And are you only just arrived?

CR. No, I came some time ago.

SOC. Then why did you sit and say nothing, instead of at once awakening me?

CR. I should not have liked myself, Socrates, to be in such great trouble and unrest as you are—indeed I should not: I have been watching with amazement your peaceful slumbers; and for that reason I did not awake you, because I wished to minimize the pain. I have always thought you to be of a happy disposition; but never did I see anything like the easy, tranquil manner in which you bear this calamity.

SOC. Why, Crito, when a man has reached my age<sup>2</sup> he ought not to be repining at the approach of death.

CR. And yet other old men find themselves in similar misfortunes, and age does not prevent them from repining.

SOC. That is true. But you have not told me why you come at this early hour.

CR. I come to bring you a message which is sad and painful; not, as I believe, to yourself, but to all of us who are your friends, and saddest of all to me.

SOC. What? Has the ship come from Delos,<sup>3</sup> on the arrival of which I am to die?

CR. No, the ship has not actually arrived, but she will probably be here to-day, as persons who have come from Sunium tell me that they left her there; and therefore to-morrow, Socrates, will be the last day of your life.

SOC. Very well, Crito; if such is the will of God, I am willing; but my belief is that there will be a delay of a day.

\* Translated by Benjamin Jowett.

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3. Socrates' execution had been delayed by an annual religious ceremony. A ship had been dispatched to the island of Delos (a center of the worship of Apollo) and until it returned no public execution could take place.

CR. Why do you think so?

SOC. I will tell you. I am to die on the day after the arrival of the ship.

CR. Yes; that is what the authorities say.

SOC. But I do not think that the ship will be here until to-morrow; this I infer from a vision which I had last night, or rather only just now, when you fortunately allowed me to sleep.

CR. And what was the nature of the vision?

SOC. There appeared to me the likeness of a woman, fair and comely, clothed in bright raiment, who called to me and said: O Socrates, The third day hence to fertile Phthia shalt thou go.<sup>4</sup>

CR. What a singular dream, Socrates!

SOC. There can be no doubt about the meaning, Crito, I think.

CR. Yes; the meaning is only too clear. But, oh! my beloved Socrates, let me entreat you once more to take my advice and escape. For if you die I shall not only lose a friend who can never be replaced, but there is another evil: people who do not know you and me will believe that I might have saved you if I had been willing to give money,<sup>5</sup> but that I did not care. Now, can there be a worse disgrace than this—that I should be thought to value money more than the life of a friend? For the many will not be persuaded that I wanted you to escape, and that you refused.

SOC. But why, my dear Crito, should we care about the opinion of the many? Good men, and they are the only persons who are worth considering, will think of these things truly as they occurred.

CR. But you see, Socrates, that the opinion of the many must be regarded, for what is now happening shows that they can do the greatest evil to any one who has lost their good opinion.

SOC. I only wish it were so, Crito; and that the many could do the greatest evil; for then they would also be able to do the greatest good—and what a fine thing this would be! But in reality they can do neither; for they cannot make a man either wise or foolish; and whatever they do is the result of chance.

CR. Well, I will not dispute with you; but please tell me, Socrates, whether you are not acting out of regard to me and your other friends: are you not afraid that if you escape from prison we may get into trouble with the informers<sup>6</sup> for having stolen you away, and lose either the whole or a great part of our property; or that even a worse evil may happen to us? Now, if you fear on our account, be at ease; for in order to save you, we ought surely to run this, or even a greater risk; be persuaded, then, and do as I say.

4. Socrates adapts the words of Achilles, who, threatening to leave Troy, declares that "on the third day thereafter we might raise generous Phthia." (*Iliad*, Book IX, l. 363.)

5. to bribe the jailers and "fix" the politicians, as he explains below.

6. private citizens who made a living by detecting and prosecuting breaches of the laws.



**soc.** Yes, Crito, that is one fear which you mention, but by no means the only one.

**CR.** Fear not—there are persons who are willing to get you out of prison at no great cost; and as for the informers, they are far from being exorbitant in their demands—a little money will satisfy them. My means, which are certainly ample, are at your service, and if you have a scruple about spending all mine, here are strangers<sup>7</sup> who will give you the use of theirs; and one of them, Simmias the Theban, has brought a large sum of money for this very purpose; and Cebes and many others are prepared to spend their money in helping you to escape. I say, therefore, do not hesitate on our account, and do not say, as you did in the court,<sup>8</sup> that you will have a difficulty in knowing what to do with yourself anywhere else. For men will love you in other places to which you may go, and not in Athens only; there are friends of mine in Thessaly,<sup>9</sup> if you like to go to them, who will value and protect you, and no Thessalian will give you any trouble. Nor can I think that you are at all justified, Socrates, in betraying your own life when you might be saved; in acting thus you are playing into the hands of your enemies, who are hurrying on your destruction. And further I should say that you are deserting your own children; for you might bring them up and educate them; instead of which you go away and leave them, and they will have to take their chance; and if they do not meet with the usual fate of orphans, there will be small thanks to you. No man should bring children into the world who is unwilling to persevere to the end in their nurture and education. But you appear to be choosing the easier part, not the better and manlier,<sup>1</sup> which would have been more becoming in one who professes to care for virtue in all his actions, like yourself. And indeed, I am ashamed not only of you, but of us who are your friends, when I reflect that the whole business will be attributed entirely to our want of courage. The trial need never have come on,<sup>10</sup> or might have been managed differently; and this last act, or crowning folly, will seem to have occurred through our negligence and cowardice, who might have saved you, if we had been good for anything; and you might have saved yourself, for there was no difficulty at all. See now, Socrates, how sad and discreditable are the consequences, both to us and you. Make up your mind then, or rather have your mind already made up, for the time of deliberation is over, and there is only one thing to be done, which must be done this very night, and if we delay at all will be no longer practicable or possible; I beseech you therefore, Socrates, be persuaded by me, and do as I say.

7. foreigners. Simmias and Cebes both came from Thebes.

8. See pp. 316-317.

9. in the north; an uncivilized part of

Greece.

10. Crito probably means that Socrates could have left Athens as soon as proceedings were started.

soc. Dear Crito, your zeal is invaluable, if a right one; but if wrong, the greater the zeal the greater the danger; and therefore we ought to consider whether I shall or shall not do as you say. For I am and always have been one of those natures who must be guided by reason, whatever the reason may be which upon reflection appears to me to be the best; and now that this chance has befallen me, I cannot repudiate my own words: the principles which I have hitherto honoured and revered I still honour, and unless we can at once find other and better principles, I am certain not to agree with you; no, not even if the power of the multitude could inflict many more imprisonments, confiscations, deaths, frightening us like children with hobgoblin terrors. What will be the fairest way of considering the question? Shall I return to your old argument about the opinions of men?—we are saying that some of them are to be regarded, and others not. Now were we right in maintaining this before I was condemned? And has the argument which was once good now proved to be talk for the sake of talking—mere childish nonsense? That is what I want to consider with your help, Crito:—whether, under my present circumstances, the argument appears to be in any way different or not; and is to be allowed by me or disallowed. That argument, which, as I believe, is maintained by many persons of authority, was to the effect, as I was saying, that the opinions of some men are to be regarded, and of other men not to be regarded. Now you, Crito, are not going to die to-morrow—at least, there is no human probability of this—and therefore you are disinterested and not liable to be deceived by the circumstances in which you are placed. Tell me then, whether I am right in saying that some opinions, and the opinions of some men only, are to be valued, and that other opinions, and the opinions of other men, are not to be valued. I ask you whether I was right in maintaining this?

CR. Certainly.

soc. The good are to be regarded, and not the bad?

CR. Yes.

soc. And the opinions of the wise are good, and the opinions of the unwise are evil?

CR. Certainly.

soc. And what was said about another matter? Is the pupil who devotes himself to the practice of gymnastics supposed to attend to the praise and blame and opinion of every man, or of one man only—his physician or trainer, whoever he may be?

CR. Of one man only.

soc. And he ought to fear the censure and welcome the praise of that one only, and not of the many?

CR. Clearly so.

soc. And he ought to act and train, and eat and drink in the

way which seems good to his single master who has understanding, rather than according to the opinion of all other men put together?

CR. True.

SOC. And if he disobeys and disregards the opinion and approval of the one, and regards the opinion of the many who have no understanding, will he not suffer evil?

CR. Certainly he will.

SOC. And what will the evil be, whither tending and what affecting, in the disobedient person?

CR. Clearly, affecting the body; that is what is destroyed by the evil.

SOC. Very good; and is not this true, Crito, of other things which we need not separately enumerate? In questions of just and unjust, fair and foul, good and evil, which are the subjects of our present consultation, ought we to follow the opinion of the many and to fear them; or the opinion of the one man who has understanding? ought we not to fear and reverence him more than all the rest of the world: and if we desert him shall we not destroy and injure that principle in us which may be assumed to be improved by justice and deteriorated by injustice;—there is such a principle?

CR. Certainly there is, Socrates.

SOC. Take a parallel instance:—if, acting under the advice of those who have no understanding, we destroy that which is improved by health and is deteriorated by disease, would life be worth having? And that which has been destroyed is—the body?

CR. Yes.

SOC. Could we live, having an evil and corrupted body?

CR. Certainly not.

SOC. And will life be worth having, if that higher part of man be destroyed, which is improved by justice and depraved by injustice? Do we suppose that principle, whatever it may be in man, which has to do with justice and injustice, to be inferior to the body?

CR. Certainly not.

SOC. More honourable than the body?

CR. Far more.

SOC. Then, my friend, we must not regard what the many say of us: but what he, the one man who has understanding of just and unjust, will say, and what the truth will say. And therefore you begin in error when you advise that we should regard the opinion of the many about just and unjust, good and evil, honourable and dishonourable,—‘Well,’ some one will say, ‘but the many can kill us.’

CR. Yes, Socrates; that will clearly be the answer.

SOC. And it is true: but still I find with surprise that the old argument is unshaken as ever. And I should like to know whether I may

say the same of another proposition—that not life, but a good life, is to be chiefly valued?

CR. Yes, that also remains unshaken.

SOC. And a good life is equivalent to a just and honourable one—that holds also?

CR. Yes, it does.

SOC. From these premisses I proceed to argue the question whether I ought or ought not to try and escape without the consent of the Athenians: and if I am clearly right in escaping, then I will make the attempt; but if not, I will abstain. The other considerations which you mention, of money and loss of character and the duty of educating one's children, are, I fear, only the doctrines of the multitude, who would be as ready to restore people to life, if they were able, as they are to put them to death—and with as little reason. But now, since the argument has thus far prevailed, the only question which remains to be considered is, whether we shall do rightly either in escaping or in suffering others to aid in our escape and paying them in money and thanks, or whether in reality we shall not do rightly; and if the latter, then death or any other calamity which may ensue on my remaining here must not be allowed to enter into the calculation.

CR. I think that you are right, Socrates; how then shall we proceed?

SOC. Let us consider the matter together, and do you either refute me if you can, and I will be convinced; or else cease, my dear friend, from repeating to me that I ought to escape against the wishes of the Athenians: for I highly value your attempts to persuade me to do so, but I may not be persuaded against my own better judgment. And now please to consider my first position, and try how you can best answer me.

CR. I will.

SOC. Are we to say that we are never intentionally to do wrong, or that in one way we ought and in another we ought not to do wrong, or is doing wrong always evil and dishonourable, as I was just now saying, and as has been already acknowledged by us? Are all our former admissions which were made within a few days to be thrown away? And have we, at our age, been earnestly discoursing with one another all our life long only to discover that we are no better than children? Or, in spite of the opinion of the many, and in spite of consequences whether better or worse, shall we insist on the truth of what was then said, that injustice is always an evil and dishonour to him who acts unjustly? Shall we say so or not?

CR. Yes.

SOC. Then we must do no wrong?

CR. Certainly not.

soc. Nor when injured injure in return, as the many imagine; for we must injure no one at all?

CR. Clearly not.

soc. Again, Crito, may we do evil?

CR. Surely not, Socrates.

soc. And what of doing evil in return for evil, which is the morality of the many—is that just or not?

CR. Not just.

soc. For doing evil to another is the same as injuring him?

CR. Very true.

soc. Then we ought not to retaliate or render evil for evil to any one, whatever evil we may have suffered from him. But I would have you consider, Crito, whether you really mean what you are saying. For this opinion has never been held, and never will be held, by any considerable number of persons; and those who are agreed and those who are not agreed upon this point have no common ground, and can only despise one another when they see how widely they differ. Tell me, then, whether you agree with and assent to my first principle, that neither injury nor retaliation nor warding off evil by evil is ever right. And shall that be the premiss of our argument? Or do you decline and dissent from this? For so I have ever thought, and continue to think; but, if you are of another opinion, let me hear what you have to say. If, however, you remain of the same mind as formerly, I will proceed to the next step.

CR. You may proceed, for I have not changed my mind.

soc. Then I will go on to the next point, which may be put in the form of a question:—Ought a man to do what he admits to be right, or ought he to betray the right?

CR. He ought to do what he thinks right.

soc. But if this is true, what is the application? In leaving the prison against the will of the Athenians, do I wrong any? or rather do I not wrong those whom I ought least to wrong? Do I not desert the principles which were acknowledged by us to be just—what do you say?

CR. I cannot tell, Socrates; for I do not know.

soc. Then consider the matter in this way:—Imagine that I am about to play truant (you may call the proceeding by any name which you like), and the laws and the government come and interrogate me: 'Tell us, Socrates,' they say, 'what are you about? are you not going by an act of yours to overturn us—the laws, and the whole state, as far as in you lies? Do you imagine that a state can subsist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law have no power, but are set aside and trampled upon by individuals?' What will be our answer, Crito, to these and the like words? Any one, and especially a rhetorician, will have a good deal to say on behalf

of the law which requires a sentence to be carried out. He will argue that this law should not be set aside; and shall we reply, 'Yes; but the state has injured us and given an unjust sentence.' Suppose I say that?

CR. Very good, Socrates.

SOC. 'And was that our agreement with you?' the law would answer; 'or were you to abide by the sentence of the state?' And if I were to express my astonishment at their words, the law would probably add: 'Answer, Socrates, instead of opening your eyes—you are in the habit of asking and answering questions. Tell us,—What complaint have you to make against us which justifies you in attempting to destroy us and the state? In the first place did we not bring you into existence? Your father married your mother by our aid and begat you. Say whether you have any objection to urge against those of us who regulate marriage?' None, I should reply. 'Or against those of us who after birth regulate the nurture and education of children, in which you also were trained? Were not the laws, which have the charge of education, right in commanding your father to train you in music<sup>11</sup> and gymnastic?' Right, I should reply. 'Well then, since you were brought into the world and nurtured and educated by us, can you deny in the first place that you are our child and slave, as your fathers were before you? And if this is true you are not on equal terms with us; nor can you think that you have a right to do to us what we are doing to you. Would you have any right to strike or revile or do any other evil to your father or your master, if you had one, because you have been struck or reviled by him, or received some other evil at his hands?—you would not say this? And because we think right to destroy you, do you think that you have any right to destroy us in return, and your country as far as in you lies? Will you, O professor of true virtue, pretend that you are justified in this? Has a philosopher like you failed to discover that our country is more to be valued and higher and holier far than mother or father or any ancestor, and more to be regarded in the eyes of the gods and of men of understanding? also to be soothed, and gently and reverently entreated when angry, even more than a father, and either to be persuaded, or if not persuaded, to be obeyed? And when we are punished by her, whether with imprisonment or stripes, the punishment is to be endured in silence; and if she leads us to wounds or death in battle, thither we follow as is right; neither may any one yield or retreat or leave his rank, but whether in battle or in a court of law, or in any other place, he must do what his city and his country order him; or he must change their view of what is just: and if he may do no violence to his father or mother, much less may he do violence to his

11. The Greek term includes literature as well as music.

country.' What answer shall we make to this, Crito? Do the laws speak truly, or do they not?

CR. I think that they do.

SOC. Then the laws will say, 'Consider, Socrates, if we are speaking truly that in your present attempt you are going to do us an injury. For, having brought you into the world, and nurtured and educated you, and given you and every other citizen a share in every good which we had to give, we further proclaim to any Athenian by the liberty which we allow him, that if he does not like us when he has become of age and has seen the ways of the city, and made our acquaintance, he may go where he pleases and take his goods with him. None of us laws will forbid him or interfere with him. Any one who does not like us and the city, and who wants to emigrate to a colony or to any other city, may go where he likes, retaining his property. But he who has experience of the manner in which we order justice and administer the state, and still remains, has entered into an implied contract that he will do as we command him. And he who disobeys us is, as we maintain, thrice wrong; first, because in disobeying us he is disobeying his parents; secondly, because we are the authors of his education; thirdly, because he has made an agreement with us that he will duly obey our commands; and he neither obeys them nor convinces us that our commands are unjust; and we do not rudely impose them, but give him the alternative of obeying or convincing us;—that is what we offer, and he does neither.

'These are the sort of accusations to which, as we were saying, you, Socrates, will be exposed if you accomplish your intentions; you, above all other Athenians.' Suppose now I ask, why I rather than anybody else? they will justly retort upon me that I above all other men have acknowledged the agreement. 'There is clear proof,' they will say, 'Socrates, that we and the city were not displeasing to you. Of all Athenians you have been the most constant resident in the city, which, as you never leave, you may be supposed to love. For you never went out of the city either to see the games, except once when you went to the Isthmus,<sup>12</sup> or to any other place unless when you were on military service; nor did you travel as other men do. Nor had you any curiosity to know other states or their laws: your affections did not go beyond us and our state; we were your special favourites, and you acquiesced in our government of you; and here in this city you begat your children, which is a proof of your satisfaction. Moreover, you might in the course of the trial, if you had liked, have fixed the penalty at banishment; the state which refuses to let you go now would have let you go then. But you pretended that you preferred death to exile, and that you were not

12. Nothing is known of this journey.

unwilling to die. And now you have forgotten these fine sentiments, and pay no respect to us the laws, of whom you are the destroyer; and are doing what only a miserable slave would do, running away and turning your back upon the compacts and agreements which you made as a citizen. And first of all answer this very question: Are we right in saying that you agreed to be governed according to us in deed, and not in word only? Is that true or not?' How shall we answer, Crito? Must we not assent?

CR. We cannot help it, Socrates.

SOC. Then will they not say: 'You, Socrates, are breaking the covenants and agreements which you made with us at your leisure, not in any haste or under any compulsion or deception, but after you have had seventy years to think of them, during which time you were at liberty to leave the city, if we were not to your mind, or if our covenants appeared to you to be unfair. You had your choice, and might have gone either to Lacedaemon or Crete, both which states are often praised by you for their good government, or to some other Hellenic or foreign state. Whereas you, above all other Athenians, seemed to be so fond of the state, or, in other words, of us her laws (and who would care about a state which has no laws?), that you never stirred out of her; the halt, the blind, the maimed were not more stationary in her than you were. And now you run away and forsake your agreements. Not so, Socrates, if you will take our advice; do not make yourself ridiculous by escaping out of the city.

'For just consider, if you transgress and err in this sort of way, what good will you do either to yourself or to your friends? That your friends will be driven into exile and deprived of citizenship, or will lose their property, is tolerably certain; and you yourself, if you fly to one of the neighboring cities, as, for example, Thebes or Megara, both of which are well governed, will come to them as an enemy, Socrates, and their government will be against you, and all patriotic citizens will cast an evil eye upon you as a subverter of the laws, and you will confirm in the minds of the judges the justice of their own condemnation of you. For he who is a corrupter of the laws is more than likely to be a corrupter of the young and foolish portion of mankind. Will you then flee from well-ordered cities and virtuous men? and is existence worth having on these terms? Or will you go to them without shame, and talk to them, Socrates? And what will you say to them? What you say here about virtue and justice and institutions and laws being the best things among men? Would that be decent of you? Surely not. But if you go away from well-governed states to Crito's friends in Thessaly, where there is great disorder and licence, they will be charmed to hear the tale of your escape from prison, set off with



ludicrous particulars of the manner in which you were wrapped in a goatskin or some other disguise, and metamorphosed as the manner is of runaways; but will there be no one to remind you that in your old age you were not ashamed to violate the most sacred laws from a miserable desire of a little more life? Perhaps not, if you keep them in a good temper; but if they are out of temper you will hear many degrading things; you will live, but how?—as the flatterer of all men, and the servant of all men; and doing what?—eating and drinking in Thessaly, having gone abroad in order that you may get a dinner. And where will be your fine sentiments about justice and virtue? Say that you wish to live for the sake of your children—you want to bring them up and educate them—will you take them into Thessaly and deprive them of Athenian citizenship? Is this the benefit which you will confer upon them? Or are you under the impression that they will be better cared for and educated here if you are still alive, although absent from them; for your friends will take care of them? Do you fancy that if you are an inhabitant of Thessaly they will take care of them, and if you are an inhabitant of the other world that they will not take care of them? Nay; but if they who call themselves friends are good for anything, they will—to be sure they will.

‘Listen, then, Socrates, to us who have brought you up. Think not of life and children first, and of justice afterwards, but of justice first, that you may be justified before the princes of the world below.<sup>13</sup> For neither will you nor any that belong to you be happier or holier or juster in this life, or happier in another, if you do as Crito bids. Now you depart in innocence, a sufferer and not a doer of evil; a victim, not of the laws but of men. But if you go forth, returning evil for evil, and injury for injury, breaking the covenants and agreements which you have made with us, and wronging those whom you ought least of all to wrong, that is to say, yourself, your friends, your country, and us, we shall be angry with you while you live, and our brethren, the laws of the world below, will receive you as an enemy; for they will know that you have done your best to destroy us. Listen, then, to us and not to Crito.’

This, dear Crito, is the voice which I seem to hear murmuring in my ears, like the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic;<sup>14</sup> that voice, I say, is humming in my ears, and prevents me from hearing any other. And I know that anything more which you may say will be vain. Yet speak, if you have anything to say.

CR. I have nothing to say, Socrates.

SOC. Leave me then, Crito, to fulfil the will of God, and to follow whither he leads.

13. the judges of the dead. See p. 319.

14. like the worshippers at the mys-

teries, who seem to hear the flutes still playing, after they have stopped.

## Phaedo\*

[*The Death of Socrates*]

[The narrator, Phaedo, who was present at the execution of Socrates, gives his friend Echecrates an account of Socrates' last hours. Many of his friends were with him on that day, among them Crito and two Theban philosophers, Simmias and Cebes. These two engaged him in an argument about the immortality of the soul, which Socrates succeeded in proving to their satisfaction. He concluded with an account of the next world, describing the place of reward for the virtuous and of punishment for the wicked. The opening words of the following selection are his conclusion of the argument.]

A man of sense ought not to say, nor will I be very confident, that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true. But I do say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily, that something of the kind is true. The venture is a glorious one, and he ought to comfort himself with words like these, which is the reason why I lengthen out the tale. Wherefore, I say, let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who having cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him and working harm rather than good, has sought after the pleasures of knowledge; and has arrayed the soul, not in some foreign attire, but in her own proper jewels, temperance, and justice, and courage, and nobility, and truth—in these adorned she is ready to go on her journey to the world below, when her hour comes. You, Simmias and Cebes, and all other men, will depart at some time or other. Me already, as a tragic poet would say, the voice of fate calls. Soon I must drink the poison;<sup>1</sup> and I think that I had better repair to the bath first, in order that the women may not have the trouble of washing my body after I am dead.

When he had done speaking, Crito said: And have you any commands for us, Socrates—anything to say about your children, or any other matter in which we can serve you?

Nothing particular, Crito, he replied: only, as I have always told you, take care of yourselves; that is a service which you may be ever rendering to me and mine and to all of us, whether you promise to do so or not. But if you have no thought for yourselves, and care not to walk according to the rule which I have prescribed for you,

\* Translated by Benjamin Jowett.

1. hemlock. This was the regular method of execution at Athens. The action of the poison is described below.

not now for the first time, however much you may profess or promise at the moment, it will be of no avail.

We will do our best, said Crito: And in what way shall we bury you?

In any way that you like; but you must get hold of me, and take care that I do not run away from you. Then he turned to us, and added with a smile:—I cannot make Crito believe that I am the same Socrates who have been talking and conducting the argument; he fancies that I am the other Socrates whom he will soon see, a dead body—and he asks, How shall he bury me? And though I have spoken many words in the endeavour to show that when I have drunk the poison I shall leave you and go to the joys of the blessed, —these words of mine, with which I was comforting you and myself, have had, as I perceive, no effect upon Crito. And therefore I want you to be surety for me to him now, as at the trial he was surety to the judges for me: but let the promise be of another sort; for he was surety for me to the judges that I would remain, and you must be my surety to him that I shall not remain, but go away and depart; and then he will suffer less at my death, and not be grieved when he sees my body being burned or buried. I would not have him sorrow at my hard lot, or say at the burial, Thus we lay out Socrates, or, Thus we follow him to the grave or bury him; for false words are not only evil in themselves, but they inflict the soul with evil. Be of good cheer then, my dear Crito, and say that you are burying my body only, and do with that whatever is usual, and what you think best.

When he had spoken these words, he arose and went into a chamber to bathe; Crito followed him and told us to wait. So we remained behind, talking and thinking of the subject of discourse, and also of the greatness of our sorrow; he was like a father of whom we were being bereaved, and we were about to pass the rest of our lives as orphans. When he had taken the bath his children were brought to him (he had two young sons and an elder one); and the women of his family also came, and he talked to them and gave them a few directions in the presence of Crito; then he dismissed them and returned to us.

Now the hour of sunset was near, for a good deal of time had passed while he was within. When he came out, he sat down with us again after his bath, but not much was said. Soon the jailer, who was the servant of the Eleven, entered and stood by him, saying:—To you, Socrates, whom I know to be the noblest and gentlest and best of all who ever came to this place, I will not impute the angry feeling of other men, who rage and swear at me, when, in obedience to the authorities, I bid them drink the poison—indeed, I am sure

that you will not be angry with me; for others, as you are aware, and not I, are to blame. And so fare you well, and try to bear lightly what must needs be—you know my errand. Then bursting into tears he turned away and went out.

Socrates looked at him and said: I return your good wishes, and will do as you bid. Then turning to us, he said, How charming the man is: since I have been in prison he has always been coming to see me, and at times he would talk to me, and was as good to me as could be, and now see how generously he sorrows on my account. We must do as he says, Crito; and therefore let the cup be brought, if the poison is prepared: if not, let the attendant prepare some.

Yet, said Crito, the sun is still upon the hill-tops, and I know that many a one has taken the draught late, and after the announcement has been made to him, he has eaten and drunk, and enjoyed the society of his beloved: do not hurry—there is time enough.

Socrates said: Yes, Crito, and they of whom you speak are right in so acting, for they think that they will be gainers by the delay; but I am right in not following their example, for I do not think that I should gain anything by drinking the poison a little later; I should only be ridiculous in my own eyes for sparing and saving a life which is already forfeit. Please then to do as I say, and not to refuse me.

Crito made a sign to the servant, who was standing by; and he went out, and having been absent for some time, returned with the jailer carrying the cup of poison. Socrates said: You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, shall give me directions how I am to proceed. The man answered: You have only to walk about until your legs are heavy, and then to lie down, and the poison will act. At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates, who in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or change of colour or feature, looking at the man with all his eyes, Echecrates, as his manner was,<sup>2</sup> took the cup and said: What do you say about making a libation<sup>3</sup> out of this cup to any god? May I, or not? The man answered: We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough. I understand, he said: but I may and must ask the gods to prosper my journey from this to the other world—even so—and so be it according to my prayer. Then raising the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow; but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered my face and wept, not for him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having to part from such a friend.

2. Socrates was famous for his projecting eyes and his intent stare.

3. He asks if he may pour a little of it out in honor of the gods, as if it were wine.

Nor was I the first; for Crito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up, and I followed; and at that moment, Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out in a loud and passionate cry which made cowards of us all. Socrates alone retained his calmness: What is this strange outcry? he said. I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not misbehave in this way, for I have been told that a man should die in peace. Be quiet then, and have patience. When we heard his words we were ashamed, and refrained our tears; and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail, and then he lay on his back, according to directions, and the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs; and after a while he pressed his foot hard, and asked him if he could feel; and he said, No; and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And he felt them himself, and said: When the poison reaches the heart, that will be the end. He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, for he had covered himself up, and said—they were his last words—he said: Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius;<sup>4</sup> will you remember to pay the debt? The debt shall be paid, said Crito; is there anything else? There was no answer to this question; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attendants uncovered him; his eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and mouth.

Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend; concerning whom I may truly say, that of all men of his time whom I have known, he was the wisest and justest and best.

4. *a cock to Asclepius*: a sacrifice to the god of healing, perhaps as a thank offering for the painlessness of his death.

## ARISTOTLE

(384–322 B.C.)

### Poetics\*

. . . Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation<sup>1</sup> of these emo-

\* Selected passages. Our text is the translation by Ingram Bywater, published by the Oxford University Press.

1. The Greek word is *katharsis*. This is probably the most disputed passage in European literary criticism. There are two main schools of interpretation; they differ in their understanding of the metaphor implied in the word *katharsis*.

Some critics take the word to mean "purification," implying a metaphor from the religious process of purification from guilt; the passions are "purified" by the tragic performance since the excitement of these passions by the performance weakens them and reduces them to just proportions in the individual. (This theory was supported by

tions. By 'language embellished,' I mean language into which rhythm, 'harmony,' and song enter. By 'the several kinds in separate parts,' I mean, that some parts are rendered through the medium of verse alone, others again with the aid of song.

Now as tragic imitation implies persons acting, it necessarily follows, in the first place, that Scenic equipment will be a part of Tragedy. Next, Song and Diction, for these are the means of imitation. By 'Diction' I mean the mere metrical arrangement of the words: as for 'Song,' it is a term whose full sense is well understood.

Again, Tragedy is the imitation of an action; and an action implies personal agents, who necessarily possess certain qualities both of character and thought. It is these that determine the qualities of actions themselves; these—thought and character—are the two natural causes from which actions spring: on these causes, again, all success or failure depends. Hence, the Plot is the imitation of the action—for by plot I here mean the arrangement of the incidents. By Character I mean that in virtue of which we ascribe certain qualities to the agents. By Thought, that whereby a statement is proved, or a general truth expressed. Every Tragedy, therefore, must have six parts, which parts determine its quality—namely, Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Scenery, Song. Two of the parts constitute the means of imitation, one the manner, and three the objects of imitation. And these complete the list. These elements have been employed, we may say, by almost all poets; in fact, every play contains Scenic accessories as well as Character, Plot, Diction, Song, and Thought.

But most important of all is the structure of the incidents. For Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of an action and of life—of happiness and misery; and happiness and misery consist in action, the end of human life being a mode of action, not a quality. Now the characters of men determine their qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or the reverse. Dramatic action, therefore, is not with a view to the representation of character: character comes in as subsidiary to the action. Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of a tragedy; and the end<sup>2</sup> is the chief thing of all. Again, without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character. . . .

These principles being established, let us now discuss the proper structure of the Plot, since this is the first, and also the most important part of Tragedy.

the German critic Lessing.) Others take the metaphor to be medical, reading the word as "purging" and interpreting the phrase to mean that the tragic performance excites the emotions only

to allay them, thus ridding the spectator of the disquieting emotions from which he suffers in everyday life; tragedy thus has a therapeutic effect.  
2. purpose.

Now, according to our definition, Tragedy is an imitation of an action, that is complete, and whole, and of a certain magnitude; for there may be a whole that is wanting in magnitude. A whole is that which has beginning, middle, and end. A beginning is that which does not itself follow anything by causal necessity, but after which something naturally is or comes to be. An end, on the contrary, is that which itself naturally follows some other thing, either by necessity, or in the regular course of events, but has nothing following it. A middle is that which follows something as some other thing follows it. A well constructed plot, therefore, must neither begin nor end at haphazard, but conform to the type here described. . . .

Unity of plot does not, as some persons think, consist in the unity of the hero. For infinitely various are the incidents in one man's life, which cannot be reduced to unity; and so, too, there are many actions of one man out of which we cannot make one action. Hence the error, as it appears, of all poets who have composed a *Heracleid*, a *Thescid*, or other poems of the kind. They imagine that as Heracles was one man, the story of Heracles ought also to be a unity. . . .

It is, moreover, evident from what has been said, that it is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen—what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity. The poet and the historian differ not by writing in verse or in prose. The work of Herodotus<sup>3</sup> might be put into verse, and it would still be a species of history, with metre no less than without it. The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular. The universal tells us how a person of given character will on occasion speak or act, according to the law of probability or necessity; and it is this universality at which Poetry aims in giving expressive names to the characters. The particular is—for example—what Alcibiades did or suffered. . . .

Of all plots and actions the episodic are the worst. I call a plot episodic in which the episodes or acts succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence. Bad poets compose such pieces by their own fault, good poets, to please the players; for, as they write for competing rivals, they draw out the plot beyond its capacity, and are often forced to break the natural continuity. . . .

Plots are either simple or complicated; for such too, in their very nature, are the actions of which the plots are an imitation. An action which is one and continuous in the sense above defined,

3. the fifth-century historian of the Persian wars.

I call Simple, when the turning point is reached without Reversal of Fortune or Recognition:<sup>4</sup> Complicated, when it is reached with Reversal of Fortune, or Recognition, or both. These last should arise from the internal structure of the plot, so that what follows should be the necessary or probable result of the preceding action. It makes all the difference whether one event is the consequence of another, or merely subsequent to it.

A reversal of fortune is, as we have said, a change by which a train of action produces the opposite of the effect intended; and that, according to our rule of probability or necessity. Thus in the *Oedipus*, the messenger,<sup>5</sup> hoping to cheer Oedipus, and to free him from his alarms about his mother, reveals his<sup>6</sup> origin, and so produces the opposite effect. . . .

A Recognition, as the name indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet for good or bad fortune. The best form of recognition is coincident with a reversal of fortune, as in the *Oedipus*. . . .

As the sequel to what has already been said, we must proceed to consider what the poet should aim at, and what he should avoid, in constructing his plots; and by what means Tragedy may best fulfil its function.

A perfect tragedy should, as we have seen, be arranged on the simple not the complicated plan. It should, moreover, imitate actions which excite pity and fear, this being the distinctive mark of tragic imitation. It follows plainly, in the first place, that the change of fortune presented must not be the spectacle of a perfectly good man brought from prosperity to adversity: for this moves neither pity nor fear; it simply shocks us. Nor, again, that of a bad man passing from adversity to prosperity: for nothing can be more alien to the spirit of Tragedy; it possesses no single tragic quality; it neither satisfies the moral sense, nor calls forth pity or fear. Nor, again, should the downfall of the utter villain be exhibited. A plot of this kind would, doubtless, satisfy the moral sense, but it would inspire neither pity nor fear; for pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves. Such an event, therefore, will be neither pitiful nor terrible. There remains, then, the character between these two extremes—that of a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty. He must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous—a personage like Oedipus, Thyestes, or other illustrious men of such families.

4. defined in the following paragraph.

5. the herdsman from Corinth.

6. Oedipus<sup>7</sup>.



A well constructed plot should, therefore, be single, rather than double as some maintain. The change of fortune should be not from bad to good, but, reversely, from good to bad. It should come about as the result not of vice, but of some great error or frailty, in a character either such as we have described, or better rather than worse. The practice of the stage bears out our view. At first the poets recounted any legends that came in their way. Now, tragedies are founded on the story of a few houses—on the fortunes of Alcmaeon, Oedipus, Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes, Telephus, and those others who have done or suffered something terrible. A tragedy, then, to be perfect according to the rules of art should be of this construction. Hence they are in error who censure Euripides just because he follows this principle in his plays, many of which end unhappily. It is, as we have said, the right ending. The best proof is that on the stage and in dramatic competition, such plays, if they are well represented, are most tragic in their effect; and Euripides, faulty as he is in the general management of his subject, yet is felt to be the most tragic of poets. . . .

As in the structure of the plot, so too in the portraiture of character, the poet should always aim either at the necessary or the probable. Thus a person of a given character should speak or act in a given way, by the rule either of necessity or of probability; just as this event should follow that by necessary or probable sequence. It is therefore evident that the unravelling of the plot, no less than the complication, must be brought about by the plot itself, and not by Machinery<sup>7</sup>—as in the *Medea*, or in the Return of the Greeks<sup>8</sup> in the *Iliad*. Machinery should be employed only for events external to the drama—either such as are previous to it and outside the sphere of human knowledge, or subsequent to it and which need to be foretold and announced; for to the gods we ascribe the power of seeing all things. Within the action there must be nothing irrational. If the irrational cannot be excluded, it should be outside the scope of the tragedy. Such is the irrational element in the *Oedipus* of Sophocles. . . .

The Chorus too should be regarded as one of the actors; it should be an integral part of the whole, and share in the action, in the manner not of Euripides but of Sophocles. As for the later poets, their choral songs pertain as little to the subject of the piece as to that of any other tragedy. They are, therefore, sung as mere inter-

7. literally the machine which was employed in the theater to show the gods flying in space. It has come to mean any implausible way of solving the complications of the plot. Medea escapes from Corinth "on the machine" in her magic chariot.

8. Aristotle refers to an incident in the second book of the *Iliad*; an attempt of the Greek rank and file to return home and abandon the siege is arrested by the intervention of Athene. (If it were a drama she would appear "on the machine.")

ludes—a practice first begun by Agathon. Yet what difference is there between introducing such choral interludes, and transferring a speech, or even a whole act, from one play to another? . . .

## LUCRETIUS

(99?–55 B.C.)

On the Nature of Things (*De rerum natura*)[*Man's Progress from Savagery to Civilization*]\*

But the race of men at that time was much hardier on the land, as was fitting inasmuch as the hard earth had made it;<sup>1</sup> built up within it was with bones larger and more solid, fitted with strong sinews throughout the flesh, not such as easily to be mastered by heat or cold or strange food or any ailment of the body. Through many lustres<sup>2</sup> of the sun rolling through the sky they passed their lives after the wide-wandering fashion of wild beasts. No sturdy guider of the curved plough was there, none knew how to work the fields with iron, to dig new shoots into the ground, to prune off old branches from the tall trees with a sickle. What sun and rain had given, what the earth had produced of her own accord, that was a gift enough to content their minds. Amidst the acorn-laden oaks they refreshed themselves for the most part; and the arbutue-berries which in winter time you now see ripen with crimson colour, then the earth bore in abundance and even larger than now. Many another kind of food besides the flowering infancy of the world then produced, hard but amply sufficient for poor mortals. But to quench thirst, rivers and springs invited them, as now the rushing of water down from the great mountains calls loud and far to the thirsting hordes of beasts. Next as they roamed abroad they dwelt in familiar woodland precincts of the Nymphs, whence they knew that some running rivulet issued rippling over the wet rocks, rippling over the rocks in abundant flow and dripping upon the green moss, with plenty left to splash and bubble over the level plain. Not yet did they know how to work things with fire, nor to use skins and to clothe themselves in the strippings of beasts; but they dwelt in the woods and forests and mountain caves, and hid their rough bodies in the underwoods when they had to escape the beating of wind and rain. They could not look to the common good, they knew not how

\* *On the Nature of Things* was left unfinished when the poet died in 55 B.C. This selection, from Book V, is from a translation by W. H. D. Rouse. Reprinted by permission of the publishers from the Loeb Classical Library edition

of Lucretius.

1. Lucretius has just explained that human beings and animals were, like the plants, generated by the earth.

2. five-year periods.

to govern their intercourse by custom and law. Whatever prize fortune gave to each, that he carried off, every man taught to live and be strong for himself at his own will. And Venus joined the bodies of lovers in the woods; for either the woman was attracted by some mutual desire, or caught by the man's violent force and vehement lust, or by a bribe—acorns and arbutus-berries or choice pears. And by the aid of their wonderful powers of hand and foot, they would hunt the woodland tribes of beasts with volleys of stones and ponderous clubs, overpowering many, shunning but a few in their lairs; and when night overtook them, like so many bristly hogs they just cast their savage bodies naked upon the ground, rolling themselves in leaves and boughs. Nor did they go seeking the day and the sun<sup>3</sup> with great outcry over the countryside, wandering panic-stricken in the shadows of night, but waited quiet and buried in sleep until the sun with rosy torch spread his light over the heavens. For since they had been accustomed from childhood always to see darkness and light return in alternate sequence, it was impossible that they should ever feel wonder, or fear lest everlasting night should possess the world, the sun's light being withdrawn for ever. Rather what troubled them was that the hordes of beasts often made their rest dangerous to them: and driven from their shelter, they would flee to the rocks and caves when a foaming boar appeared or a mighty lion, and at dead of night in terror would yield their leaf-strewn beds to the savage guests. . . .

Next, when they had got them huts and skins, and fire, and woman mated with man was appropriated to one, [and the laws of wedlock] became known, and they saw offspring born of them, then first the human race began to grow soft. For the fire saw to it that their shivering bodies were less able to endure cold under the canopy of heaven, and Venus sapped their strength, and children easily broke their parents' proud spirit by coaxings. Then also neighbours began eagerly to join friendship amongst themselves to do no hurt and suffer no violence, and asked protection for their children and womankind, signifying by voice and gesture with stammering tongue that it was right for all to pity the weak. Nevertheless concord could not altogether be produced, but a good part, nay the most kept the covenant unblemished, or else the race of mankind would have been even then wholly destroyed, nor would birth and begetting have been able to prolong their posterity.

But the various sounds of the tongue<sup>4</sup> nature drove them to utter, and convenience pressed out of them names for things, not far other-

3. Lucretius is rejecting a theory that primitive man was so ignorant of the order of nature that he was afraid the sun would not return the next day.

4. Compare St. Augustine's account of how he learned to talk. (*Confessions*, Book I.)

wise than very speechlessness is seen to drive children to the use of gesture, when it makes them point with the finger at things that are before them. . . .

That you may not perhaps be quietly asking yourself the question, it was lightning that first brought fire down to the earth for mortals, and from this all blazing flames have been spread abroad. For we can see many things catch fire touched by the flames from on high, when the stroke from heaven has given them its heat. And yet also when a branching tree struck by the winds, swaying and tossed about, leans on the branches of a tree, fire is pressed out by the great force of the friction, and at times the burning glare of flame flashes while branches and twigs are rubbed together. Either of these causes may have given fire to mankind. After that, the sun taught them to cook food and to soften it by the heat of flames, since they saw many things soften, vanquished by the blows of the heat of his rays amid the fields.

More and more daily they were shown how to change their former life and living for new ways, by those men of goodwill who were pre-eminent in genius and strong in mind. Kings began to found cities and to build a citadel for their own protection and refuge; and they divided cattle and lands, and gave them to each according to beauty and strength and genius: for beauty had great power, and strength had importance, in those days. Afterwards<sup>5</sup> wealth was introduced and gold was discovered, which easily robbed both the strong and the handsome of their honour; for however strong and handsome in body, men for the most part follow the party of the richer. But if one should guide his life by true principles, man's greatest riches is to live on a little with contented mind; for a little is never lacking. Yet men desired to be famous and powerful, that their fortune might stand fast upon a firm foundation, and that being wealthy they might be able to pass a quiet life: all in vain, since in the struggle to climb to the summit of honour they made their path full of danger; and even down from the summit, nevertheless, envy strikes them oftentimes like a thunderbolt and casts them with scorn into loathly Tartarus; since envy, like the thunderbolt, usually scorches the summits and all those that are elevated above others; so that it is indeed much better to obey in peace, than to desire to hold the world in fee and to rule kingdoms. Leave them then to be weary for nought, and to sweat blood in struggling along the narrow path of ambition; since their wisdom comes from the lips of others, and they pursue things on hearsay rather than from their own feelings. And this was in the beginning, as much as it is now and shall be without end.

5. Lucretius here delivers an Epicurean sermon on the vanity of human ambitions.

Kings therefore were slain; the ancient majesty of thrones and proud sceptres lay overthrown in the dust; the illustrious badge of the topmost head, bloodstained beneath the feet of the mob, bewailed its lost honour: for men are eager to tread underfoot what they have once too much feared. So things came to the uttermost dregs of confusion, when each man for himself sought dominion and exaltation. Then there were some who taught them to create magistrates, and established law, that they might be willing to obey statutes. For mankind, tired of living in violence, was fainting from its feuds, and so they were readier of their own will to submit to statutes and strict rules of law. For because each man in his wrath would make ready to avenge himself more severely than is permitted now by just laws, for this reason men were utterly weary of living in violence. Hence comes fear of punishment that taints the prizes of life; for violence and injury enclose in their net all that do such things, and generally return upon him who began, nor is it easy to pass a quiet and peaceful life for him whose deeds violate the bonds of the common peace. For even if he hide it from gods and men, he must yet be uncertain that it will for ever remain hidden; seeing that often many men speaking in dreams or raving in delirium, are said to have discovered themselves, and to have shown abroad both hidden vices and hidden sins.

Next it is not very difficult to explain in words, what cause has spread the divinity of the gods over great nations and filled the cities with altars, and has made customary rites to be undertaken, rites which now flourish in our magnificence and our great places, from which even now remains implanted in mortal men the awe that raises new shrines to the gods all over the world, and drives them to throng together on festal days. The truth is, that even in those days the generations of men used to see with waking mind, and still more in sleep, gods, conspicuous in beauty and of marvellous bodily stature. To these therefore they attributed sensation, because they appeared to move their limbs and to utter proud speech in keeping with their splendid beauty and vast strength. And they gave them everlasting life, because there was always a succession of visions coming up in which the shape remained the same, and because they thought that certainly beings endowed with such strength could not in any case lightly be overcome by any force. Therefore they thought them to be pre-eminent in happiness, because the fear of death troubled none of them, and at the same time because in sleep they saw them perform many marvellous feats and felt no distress therefrom. Besides they observed how the array of heaven and the various seasons of the year came round in due order, and could not discover by what causes all that came about. Therefore their refuge was to leave all in the hands of the gods, and

to suppose that by their nod all things were done. And they placed the gods' habitation and abode in the sky, because through the sky the night and the moon are seen to revolve, moon and day and night and the solemn stars of night, heaven's night-wandering torches, clouds and sun, rain and snow, winds, lightnings and hail, rapid roarings and threatening throes of thunder.

. . . Copper and gold and iron were discovered, so also heavy silver and massy lead, when fire upon the great mountains had burnt up huge forests with its heat; whether by some lightning stroke from heaven, or because men waging war in the forests had brought fire upon their foes to affright them, or because led by the richness of the soil they wished to clear the fat fields and make the place fit for pasturage, or to destroy the wild beasts and to enrich themselves with spoil. For hunting with pit and fire came up, before fencing about a glade with nets or putting up game with dogs. However that may be, whatever the cause by which flaming heat with appalling din had devoured the forests deep down to the roots and parched up the earth with fire, through the hot veins into some hollow place of the earth would ooze and collect a stream of silver and gold, of copper also and lead: and when afterwards they saw these congealed together and gleaming upon the earth with bright colour, they would pick them up captivated by the sleek smooth grace and would see that they were each moulded into a shape like the hollows in which they had left their mark. Then it dawned upon them that these lumps might be melted and run into any shape and form of objects, and might furthermore be beaten out with blows into the sharpest and finest possible point or edge, to make themselves tools, to cut down trees, to rough-hew timber and to plane planks and beams, to bore also and to pierce and perforate. And they would try to make these at first no less of silver and gold than of bronze with its tough and strong substance, but in vain, since the strength of these yielded and bent nor could they so well bear the hard work. Then bronze was of more worth, and gold was thought little of, being useless with its edge blunted and dull. Now bronze is thought little of, and gold has mounted to the chief honour. So rolling time changes the seasons of things. What was of worth comes at length to be held in no honour; next something else comes up and comes forth from contempt, is sought for more day by day, and once discovered thrives in praise and is held in wonderful honour among men.

Now it is easy for you, Memmius,<sup>6</sup> to recognize of yourself in what manner the nature of iron was discovered. The ancient weapons were hands, nails, and teeth, and stones and branches also broken from forest trees, flames and fire as soon as they were known.

6. the Roman aristocrat to whom Lucretius addresses his poem.

Later was discovered the power of iron and of bronze. The use of bronze was known before iron, because it is more easily worked and there is greater store. With bronze men tilled the soil of the earth, with bronze they stirred up the waves of war, and dealt devastating wounds, and seized cattle and lands; for when some were armed, all that was naked and unarmed readily gave way to them. Then by small degrees the sword of iron gained ground, and the fashion of the bronze sickle became a thing of contempt; then with iron they began to break the soil of the earth, and the struggles of war now become doubtful were made equal.

And it is an earlier practice for one to mount on horseback armed, to guide the horse by the bit and to do doughty deeds with the right hand, than to essay the perils of war in a two-horse car. And to yoke a pair came before yoking twice two to the car, and before the armed men mounted the scythed chariot. Next the Lucanian oxen<sup>7</sup> with turreted backs, hideous creatures, snake-handed,<sup>8</sup> were taught by the Carthaginians<sup>9</sup> to endure the wounds of war, and to confound the great hosts of Mars. Thus gloomy Discord bred one thing after another, to be frightful in battle for the nations of men, and added new terror to warfare day by day. . . .

Garments of patchwork came before garments of woven cloth. Woven cloth comes after iron, because iron is needed for equipping the loom, nor without it can such smoothness be given to the heddles and spindles, shuttles and noisy yarn-~~beams~~. And nature made men to work in wool before womankind, for the male sex as a whole is far superior in skill and more clever; until the austere farmers made it a reproach, so that the men agreed to leave it in women's hands and themselves to share in hard labour and by hard work to harden their bodies and hands.

But the pattern of sowing and the beginning of grafting first came from nature herself the maker of all things, since berries and acorns falling from trees in due time produced swarms of seedlings underneath; and this also gave them the whimsy to insert shoots in the branches and to plant new slips in the earth all over the fields. Next one after another they tried ways of cultivating the little plot they loved, and found out that the earth could tame wild fruits by kind treatment and friendly tillage. Day by day they made the forests climb higher up the mountains and yield the place below to their tilth, that they might have meadows, pools and streams, crops and luxuriant vineyards on hill and plain, and that a grey-

7. elephants, first used against the Romans by the Macedonian general Pyrrhus in the battle at Heraclea (in Lucania) in 280 B.C.

8. Lucretius refers to the elephant's trunk.

9. Carthage was the center of a great commercial empire against which Rome

fought three separate wars for supremacy in the western Mediterranean. Elephants were used by the Carthaginians in battles against the Romans in North Africa, and Hannibal, the Carthaginian invader of Italy, brought elephants with him from Spain over the Pyrenees and the Alps.

green belt of olives might run between to make the boundaries stretching forth over hills and dales and plains: even as now you see the whole place mapped out with charming variety, laid out and intersected with sweet fruit-trees and set about with fertile plantations of trees.

Again, to imitate with the mouth the liquid notes of the birds came long before men could delight their ears by warbling smooth carols in song. And the zephyrs whistling through hollow reeds first taught the countrymen to blow into hollow hemlock-stalks. Next, step by step they learnt the plaintive melodies which the reed-pipe gives forth tapped by the players' fingertips,—the pipe discovered amid pathless woods and forests, amid the solitary haunts of shepherds and the peace of the open air. These soothed their minds and gave them delight when they had had their fill of food: for that is when song is pleasant. Often therefore stretched in groups on the soft grass hard by a stream of water under the branches of a tall tree they made merry at cheap cost, above all when the weather smiled and the season of the year painted the green herbage with flowers. Then was the time for jest, for gossip, for pleasant peals of laughter. For then the rustic muse was in its prime; then they would wreath the head and shoulders with woven garlands of flowers, prompted by joyous playfulness, and they would march out moving their limbs out of time and beating mother earth stiffly with stiff foot: from which mirth would arise and pleasant peals of laughter, because all these things being new and wonderful had great vogue. And when wakeful, this was their consolation for sleep, to sing many a long-drawn note and to turn a tune and to run along the tops of the reedpipes with curved lip; whence even now the watchmen keep up the tradition, and they have learnt how to keep various kinds of rhythm, yet for all that they have not more profit in enjoyment than the woodland people had who were born of the soil. For what is ready to hand, unless we have known something more lovely before, gives pre-eminent delight and seems to hold the field, until something found afterwards to be better is wont to spoil all that and to change our taste for anything ancient. So men grew tired of acorns, so were deserted those old beds strewn with herbage and leaves piled up. The garment also of wild-beast pelt fell into contempt; which I can imagine must have excited such envy in those days when discovered, that he who first wore one was done to death by treachery, and even then that it was torn to pieces amongst them with much bloodshed and was lost and could not be turned to use. Then therefore pelts, now gold and purple, trouble men's life with cares and weary it with war; in which as I think the greater fault rests upon us. For without the pelts, cold tormented the naked sons of earth; but we take no harm to be without a vestment of purple



or worked with gold and great figures, so long as there is the poor man's cloak to protect us. Therefore mankind labours always in vain and to no purpose, consuming their days in empty cares, plainly because they know not the limit of possession, and how far it is ever possible for real pleasure to grow: and this little by little has carried life out into the deep sea, and has stirred up from the bottom the great billows of war.

But those watchful sentinels sun and moon, travelling with their light around the great revolving region of heaven, have taught men well that the seasons of the year come round, and that all is done on a fixed plan and in fixed order.

Already men lived fenced in with strong towers, the earth was divided up and distributed for cultivation, already every sea was covered with sail-flying ships, men had already allies and friends under formal treaty, when poets began to commemorate doughty deeds in verse; nor had letters been invented long time before. For this reason our age cannot look back upon what happened before, unless in any respect reasoning shows the way.

Ships and agriculture, fortifications and laws, arms, roads, clothing and all else of this kind, life's prizes, its luxuries also from first to last, poetry and pictures, the shaping of statues by the artist, all these as men progressed gradually step by step were taught by practice and the experiments of the active mind. So by degrees time brings up before us every single thing, and reason lifts it into the precincts of light. For their intellect saw one thing after another grow famous amongst the arts, until they came to their highest point.

[Against the Fear of Death]\*

What has this bugbear death to frighten man,  
If souls can die, as well as bodies can?  
For, as before our birth we felt no pain,  
When Punic arms infested land and main,  
When heav'n and earth were in confusion hurl'd,  
For the debated empire of the world,  
Which aw'd with dreadful expectation lay,  
Sure to be slaves, uncertain who should sway:  
So, when our mortal frame shall be disjoin'd,  
The lifeless lump uncoupled from the mind,  
From sense of grief and pain we shall be free;  
We shall not feel, because we shall not be.

\* From Book III. Translated by John Dryden.

4. *Punic* . . . *main*: the Second Punic War (218–201 B.C.). In this decisive struggle for the domination of

the western Mediterranean, the Carthaginian (Punic) general Hannibal invaded Italy and came close to taking Rome. Lucretius is writing some hundred and fifty years after these events.

Tho' earth in seas, and seas in heav'n were lost,  
 We should not move, we only should be toss'd.  
 Nay, ev'n suppose when we have suffer'd fate, 15  
 The soul could feel in her divided state,  
 What's that to us? for we are only we  
 While souls and bodies in one frame agree.  
 Nay, tho' our atoms should revolve by chance,  
 And matter leap into the former dance; 20  
 Tho' time our life and motion could restore,  
 And make our bodies what they were before,  
 What gain to us would all this bustle bring?  
 The new-made man would be another thing.  
 When once an interrupting pause is made, 25  
 That individual being is decay'd.  
 We, who are dead and gone, shall bear no part  
 In all the pleasures, nor shall feel the smart  
 Which to that other mortal shall accrue,  
 Whom of our matter time shall mold anew. 30  
 For backward if you look on that long space  
 Of ages past, and view the changing face  
 Of matter, toss'd and variously combin'd  
 In sundry shapes, 't is easy for the mind  
 From thence t' infer, that seeds of things have been 35  
 In the same order as they now are seen:  
 Which yet our dark remembrance cannot trace,  
 Because a pause of life, a gaping space,  
 Has come betwixt, where memory lies dead,  
 And all the wand'ring motions from the sense are fled. 40  
 For whosoe'er shall in misfortunes live,  
 Must *be*, when those misfortunes shall arrive;  
 And since the man who *is* not, feels not woe,  
 (For death exempts him, and wards off the blow,  
 Which we, the living, only feel and bear,) 45  
 What is there left for us in death to fear?  
 When once that pause of life has come between,  
 'T is just the same as we had never been.  
 And therefore if a man bemoan his lot,  
 That after death his mold'ring limbs shall rot, 50  
 Or flames, or jaws of beasts devour his mass,  
 Know, he's an unsincere, unthinking ass.  
 A secret sting remains within his mind;  
 The fool is to his own cast offs kind.

35. *seeds of things*: atoms.51. *flames*: Cremation was the nor-

mal method of disposition of dead bodies.

He boasts no sense can after death remain, } 55  
 Yet makes himself a part of life again,  
 As if some other He could feel the pain. }  
 If, while he live, this thought molest his head,  
 What wolf or vulture shall devour me dead?  
 He wastes his days in idle grief, nor can 60  
 Distinguish 'twixt the body and the man;  
 But thinks himself can still himself survive;  
 And, what when dead he feels not, feels alive.  
 Then he repines that he was born to die,  
 Nor knows in death there is no other He, 65  
 No living He remains his grief to vent,  
 And o'er his senseless carcass to lament.  
 If after death 't is painful to be torn  
 By birds, and beasts, then why not so to burn;  
 Or, drench'd in floods of honey, to be soak'd; 70  
 Imbalm'd, to be at once preserv'd and chok'd;  
 Or on an airy mountain's top to lie,  
 Expos'd to cold and heav'n's inclemency;  
 Or crowded in a tomb to be oppress'd  
 With monumental marble on thy breast? 75  
 But to be snatch'd from all thy household joys,  
 From thy chaste wife, and thy dear prattling boys,  
 Whose little arms about thy legs are cast,  
 And climbing for a kiss prevent their mother's haste,  
 Inspiring secret pleasure thro' thy breast— 80  
 All these shall be no more: thy friends oppress'd  
 Thy care and courage now no more shall free;  
 "Ah! wretch!" thou cry'st, "ah! miserable me!  
 One woful day sweeps children, friends, and wife,  
 And all the brittle blessings of my life!" 85  
 Add one thing more, and all thou say'st is true;  
 Thy want and wish of them is vanish'd too:  
 Which, well consider'd, were a quick relief  
 To all thy vain imaginary grief.  
 For thou shalt sleep, and never wake again, 90  
 And, quitting life, shalt quit thy living pain.  
 But we, thy friends, shall all those sorrows find,  
 Which in forgetful death thou leav'st behind;  
 No time shall dry our tears, nor drive thee from our mind. }  
 The worst that can befall thee, measur'd right, 95  
 Is a sound slumber, and a long good-night.

70. *honey*: used in an expensive type of embalming.

79. *prevent*: anticipate.

Yet thus the fools, that would be thought the wits,  
 Disturb their mirth with melancholy fits:  
 When healths go round, and kindly brimmers flow,  
 Till the fresh garlands on their foreheads glow, 100  
 They whine, and cry: "Let us make haste to live.  
 Short are the joys that human life can give."  
 Eternal preachers, that corrupt the draught,  
 And pall the god, that never thinks, with thought;  
 Idiots with all that thought, to whom the worst 105  
 Of death is want of drink, and endless thirst,  
 Or any fond desire as vain as these.  
 For ev'n in sleep, the body, wrapp'd in ease,  
 Supinely lies, as in the peaceful grave;  
 And, wanting nothing, nothing can it crave. 110  
 Were that sound sleep eternal, it were death;  
 Yet the first atoms then, the seeds of breath,  
 Are moving near to sense; we do but shake  
 And rouse that sense, and straight we are awake.  
 Then death to us, and death's anxiety, 115  
 Is less than nothing, if a less could be.  
 For then our atoms, which in order lay,  
 Are scatter'd from their heap, and puff'd away,  
 And never can return into their place,  
 When once the pause of life has left an empty space. 120  
 And last, suppose great Nature's voice should call  
 To thee, or me, or any of us all:  
 "What dost thou mean, ungrateful wretch, thou vain,  
 Thou mortal thing, thus idly to complain,  
 And sigh and sob that thou shalt be no more? 125  
 For if thy life were pleasant heretofore,  
 If all the bounteous blessings, I could give,  
 Thou hast enjoy'd; if thou hast known to live,  
 And pleasure not leak'd thro' thee like a sieve; }  
 Why dost thou not give thanks as at a plenteous feast, 130  
 Cramm'd to the throat with life, and rise and take thy rest?  
 But if my blessings thou hast thrown away,  
 If indigested joys pass'd thro', and would not stay,  
 Why dost thou wish for more to squander still?  
 If life be grown a load, a real ill, 135  
 And I would all thy cares and labors end,  
 Lay down thy burden, fool, and know thy friend.

99. *brimmers*: full cups (of wine).104. *the god, that never thinks*: Bacchus.113. *moving near to sense*: The only difference between sleep and death is

that in sleep the atoms of which we are composed are still in ordered motion and combination, while in death they are scattered; in neither state are we conscious.

To please thee, I have emptied all my store;  
I can invent and can supply no more,  
But run the round again, the round I ran before. } 140

Suppose thou art not broken yet with years,  
Yet still the selfsame scene of things appears,  
And would be ever, couldst thou ever live;  
For life is still but life, there's nothing new to give."  
What can we plead against so just a bill? 145

We stand convicted, and our cause goes ill.  
But if a wretch, a man oppress'd by fate,  
Should beg of Nature to prolong his date,  
She speaks aloud to him with more disdain:  
"Be still, thou martyr fool, thou covetous of pain." 150

But if an old decrepit sot lament;  
"What, thou," she cries, "who hast outliv'd content!  
Dost thou complain, who hast enjoy'd my store?  
But this is still th' effect of wishing more.  
Unsatisfied with all that Nature brings; 155

Loathing the present, liking absent things;  
From hence it comes, thy vain desires, at strife  
Within themselves, have tantaliz'd thy life;  
And ghastly death appar'd before thy sight,  
Ere thou hadst gorg'd thy soul and senses with *delight*. 160  
Now leave those joys, unsuited to thy age,  
To a fresh comer, and resign the stage."

Is Nature to be blam'd if thus she chide?  
No, sure; for 't is her business to provide,  
Against this ever-changing frame's decay, 165  
New things to come, and old to pass away.

One being, worn, another being makes;  
Chang'd, but not lost; for Nature gives and takes:  
New matter must be found for things to come,  
And these must waste like those, and follow Nature's doom. 170  
All things, like thee, have time to rise and rot;  
And from each other's ruin are begot:  
For life is not confin'd to him or thee;

'T is given to all for use, to none for property.  
Consider former ages past and gone, 175

Whose circles ended long ere thine begun,  
Then tell me, fool, what part in them thou hast.  
Thus may'st thou judge the future by the past.  
What horror see'st thou in that quiet state?  
What bugbear dreams to fright thee after fate? 180

No ghost, no goblins, that still passage keep;  
But all is there serene, in that eternal sleep.

For all the dismal tales that poets tell  
 Are verified on earth, and not in hell.  
 No Tantalus looks up with fearful eye, 185  
 Or dreads th' impending rock to crush him from on high;  
 But fear of chance on earth disturbs our easy hours,  
 Or vain imagin'd wrath of vain imagin'd pow'rs.  
 No Tityus torn by vultures lies in hell;  
 Nor could the lobes of his rank liver swell } 190  
 To that prodigious mass for their eternal meal: }  
 Not tho' his monstrous bulk had cover'd o'er  
 Nine spreading acres, or nine thousand more; }  
 Not tho' the globe of earth had been the giant's floor: } 195  
 Nor in eternal torments could he lie,  
 Nor could his corpse sufficient food supply.  
 But he's the Tityus, who by love oppress'd, }  
 Or tyrant passion preying on his breast, }  
 And ever-anxious thoughts, is robb'd of rest. }  
 The Sisyphus is he, whom noise and strife 200  
 Seduce from all the soft retreats of life,  
 To vex the government, disturb the laws:  
 Drunk with the fumes of popular applause,  
 He courts the giddy crowd to make him great,  
 And swcats and toils in vain, to mount the sovereign seat. 205  
 For still to aim at pow'r, and still to fail,  
 Ever to strive, and never to prevail,  
 What is it, but, in reason's true account,  
 To heave the stone against the rising mount?  
 Which urg'd, and labor'd, and forc'd up with pain, 210  
 Recoils, and rolls impetuous down, and smokes along the plain.  
 Then still to treat thy ever-craving mind  
 With ev'ry blessing, and of ev'ry kind,  
 Yet never fill thy rav'ning appetite;  
 Tho' years and seasons vary thy delight, 215  
 Yet nothing to be seen of all the store,  
 But still the wolf within thee barks for more;  
 This is the fable's moral, which they tell  
 Of fifty foolish virgins damn'd in hell  
 To leaky vessels, which the liquor spill; 220

184. *on earth, and not in hell*: in the following lines Lucretius interprets the fabled punishments of great evildoers in hell as allegories of the woes of this life.

185. *Tantalus*: He was confined beneath an overhanging rock which every minute seemed about to fall.

189. *Tityus*: a giant who was punished for his attempted rape of Artemis by a pair of vultures' tearing per-

petually at his liver. His body was supposed to cover nine acres.

200. *Sisyphus*: condemned to roll a huge rock to the top of a hill; every time he reached the summit the rock rolled back down again.

211. *smokes*: races.

219. *fifty foolish virgins*: the fifty daughters of Danaus, who murdered their husbands. They were condemned to carry water in a sieve.

To vessels of their sex, which none could ever fill.  
 As for the Dog, the Furies, and their snakes,  
 The gloomy caverns, and the burning lakes,  
 And all the vain infernal trumpery,  
 They neither are, nor were, nor e'er can be. 225  
 But here on earth the guilty have in view  
 The mighty pains to mighty mischiefs due;  
 Racks, prisons, poisons, the Tarpeian rock,  
 Stripes, hangmen, pitch, and suffocating smoke;  
 And last, and most, if these were cast behind, 230  
 Th' avenging horror of a conscious mind,  
 Whose deadly fear anticipates the blow,  
 And sees no end of punishment and woe;  
 But looks for more, at the last gasp of breath:  
 This makes a hell on earth, and life a death. 235

Meantime, when thoughts of death disturb thy head;  
 Consider, Ancus, great and good, is dead;  
 Ancus, thy better far, was born to die;  
 And thou, dost thou bewail mortality?  
 So many monarchs with their mighty state, 240  
 Who rul'd the world, were overrul'd by fate.  
 'That haughty king, who lorded o'er the main,  
 And whose stupendous bridge did the wild waves restrain,  
 (In vain they foam'd, in vain they threaten'd wreck,  
 While his proud legions march'd upon their back,) 245  
 Him death, a greater monarch, overcame;  
 Nor spar'd his guards the more, for their immortal name.  
 The Roman chief, the Carthaginian dread,  
 Scipio, the thunderbolt of war, is dead,  
 And, like a common slave, by fate in triumph led. } 250  
 The founders of invented arts are lost;  
 And wits, who made eternity their boast.  
 Where now is Homer, who possess'd the throne?  
 Th' immortal work remains, the mortal author's gone.  
 Democritus, perceiving age invade, 255  
 His body weaken'd, and his mind decay'd,  
 Obey'd the summons with a cheerful face;  
 Made haste to welcome death, and met him half the race.

222. *Dog*: Cerberus, the dog which guarded the gates of hell.

228. *Tarpeian rock*: a cliff at Rome from which traitors were hurled.

237. *Ancus*: the fourth of the legendary kings of Rome.

243. *stupendous bridge*: The reference is to the bridge over the Hellespont built by Xerxes, king of Persia, for his invasion of Greece in 480 B.C.

249. *Scipio*: the Roman general who defeated Hannibal at Zama in 202 B.C.

255. *Democritus*: a Greek philosopher; one of the pioneers of the atomic theory on which the doctrines of Epicurus (and Lucretius) were based. According to tradition he starved himself to death when he was over ninety years old.

That stroke ev'n Epicurus could not bar, }  
 Tho' he in wit surpass'd mankind, as far } 260  
 As does the midday sun the midnight star.  
 And thou, dost thou disdain to yield thy breath,  
 Whose very life is little more than death?  
 More than one half by lazy sleep possess'd; }  
 And when awake, thy soul but nods at best, } 265  
 Day-dreams and sickly thoughts revolving in thy breast.  
 Eternal troubles haunt thy anxious mind,  
 Whose cause and cure thou never hop'st to find;  
 But still uncertain, with thyself at strife,  
 Thou wander'st in the labyrinth of life. 270  
 O, if the foolish race of man, who find  
 A weight of cares still pressing on their mind,  
 Could find as well the cause of this unrest,  
 And all this burden lodg'd within the breast;  
 Sure they would change their course, nor live as now, 275  
 Uncertain what to wish or what to vow.  
 Uneasy both in country and in town,  
 They search a place to lay their burden down.  
 One, restless in his palace, walks abroad,  
 And vainly thinks to leave behind the load; 280  
 But straight returns, for he's as restless there,  
 And finds there's no relief in open air.  
 Another to his villa would retire,  
 And spurs as hard as if it were on fire;  
 No sooner enter'd at his country door, } 285  
 But he begins to stretch, and yawn, and snore;  
 Or seeks the city which he left before.  
 Thus every man o'erworks his weary will, }  
 To shun himself, and to shake off his ill; }  
 The shaking fit returns, and hangs upon him still. } 290  
 No prospect of repose, nor hope of ease;  
 The wretch is ignorant of his disease;  
 Which known would all his fruitless trouble spare,  
 For he would know the world not worth his care;  
 Then would he search more deeply for the cause; 295  
 And study nature well, and nature's laws:  
 For in this moment lies not the debate,  
 But on our future, fix'd, eternal state;

259. *Epicurus*: Greek philosopher (342-270 B.C.) whose philosophy is presented in Lucretius' poem. Basing himself on the atomic theories of his predecessors, he put forward a materialistic scheme of the universe and stated that the gods, if they exist, have no

concern for human life. He recommended the pursuit of happiness, which he defined as the peace of mind which comes from the cultivation of virtue.

273. *Could . . . unrest*: through the study of the Epicurean system. See ll. 294 ff.



That never-changing state, which all must keep,  
Whom death has doom'd to everlasting sleep. 300

Why are we then so fond of mortal life,  
Beset with dangers, and maintain'd with strife?  
A life which all our care can never save;  
One fate attends us, and one common grave.  
Besides, we tread but a perpetual round; 305  
We ne'er strike out, but beat the former ground,  
And the same mawkish joys in the same track are found. }  
For still we think an absent blessing best,  
Which cloy, and is no blessing when possess'd; }  
A new arising wish expels it from the breast. } 310  
The fev'rish thirst of life increases still;  
We call for more and more, and never have our fill,  
Yet know not what to-morrow we shall try,  
What dregs of life in the last draught may lie:  
Nor, by the longest life we can attain, 315  
One moment from the length of death we gain; }  
For all behind belongs to his eternal reign. }  
When once the Fates have cut the mortal thread,  
The man as much to all intents is dead,  
Who dies to-day, and will as long be so, 320  
As he who died a thousand years ago.

## CICERO

(106-43 B.C.)

### On the Republic (*De republica*)\*

#### *The Dream of Scipio*

On landing in Africa <sup>1</sup>—I had gone there, as you both know, as a military tribune<sup>2</sup> in the Fourth Legion for the consul Manius Manilius<sup>3</sup>—there was nothing that I wanted so much as to meet King Masinissa,<sup>4</sup> who for the best of reasons<sup>5</sup> was a great friend of

\* Written from 54 B.C. on; published before 51 B.C. Our selection is the principal surviving fragment of this work. This translation by H. A. Rice is here first published.

1. The speaker is Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus the Younger, the Roman general who led the legions to victory in the Third Punic War (149-146 B.C.), which resulted in the final subjugation of Rome's rival in the West, Carthage. He is supposed to be speaking at a conversation which took place twenty years later; he tells the story of what happened to him in the first year of the war which made his

name, when he was an undistinguished junior officer.

2. officer on the staff of a legion.

3. The consuls were the two chief magistrates at home, and commanders of the armies in the field. Scipio was later to replace Manius Manilius as commander.

4. king of Numidia; he became a trusted ally of the Romans in the Second Punic War (218-201 B.C.). He was a close friend of the first Scipio Africanus, who had adopted as his grandson the Scipio who tells this story.

5. among others because the elder Scipio had enlarged his dominions.

our family. When I came to his house the old man burst into tears as he embraced me and then lifting his eyes to heaven cried: "Thanks give I to thee, O Sun supreme, and to you, ye other dwellers in the skies, that before I take my leave of this life I see in my kingdom and under my own roof P. Cornelius Scipio whose very name refreshes me; for never from my heart has faded the memory of that great and unconquerable hero!"<sup>6</sup> Then, we spent the whole day in conversing together—I asking him about his kingdom and he questioning me in turn about our country.

And later, after we had dined amidst regal state we prolonged our talk until far into the night. The old man would talk about nothing except of Africanus and remembered not only all that he had done but all as well that he had said. Then, when we had parted to take our rest a sleep much deeper than was usual fell upon me, for I was weary from my journey and had stayed awake until very late. And then—(I suppose it was a result of what we had been talking about; for it happens often that the things that we have been thinking and speaking of bring about something in our sleep. So Ennius<sup>7</sup> relates in his dream about Homer, of whom in hours of wakefulness he used so often to think and speak)—Africanus stood there before me, in figure familiar to me from his bust<sup>8</sup> rather than from life. I shuddered with dread as I recognized him but he said, "Be calm, Scipio, and have no fear, but fail not to remember the things that I shall tell.

"Do you see that city<sup>9</sup> which by me was forced to kneel before the Roman people and is now renewing battle as of old and will not rest in peace?" And from a place high up above, studded with stars and blazing with light, he pointed to Carthage far below. "To the siege of that city you are now marching, a soldier almost in the ranks. Two years from now you will destroy it as consul in command, and will win thereby a surname which hitherto you have held as a legacy from me.<sup>10</sup> And then, after you have blotted out Carthage, celebrated your triumph and become censor<sup>11</sup> and gone as legate<sup>12</sup> to Egypt, Syria, Asia and Greece, you will be chosen, while absent,<sup>13</sup> consul for the second time, complete a mighty war and destroy Numantia.<sup>14</sup> But just when you have been driven in triumph up

6. the elder Scipio.

7. Roman epic poet (239–169 B.C.) who began his epic of Roman history with an account of Homer's appearance to him in a dream.

8. The Roman aristocrat displayed the busts of his ancestors in his house.

9. Carthage.

10. Hitherto he has been called Africanus in virtue of his adoption by the elder Scipio; after the capture of

Carthage he will deserve the name by his own deeds.

11. the magistrate in charge of the senatorial rolls, who passed judgment on the senators' moral and financial fitness to continue in office.

12. ambassador.

13. He would be elected to the office without campaigning for it.

14. in Spain; it was destroyed in 133 B.C.

to the Capitol, you will find the state in turmoil through the schemings of a grandson of mine.<sup>15</sup>

"It is here, Africanus, that you must needs show to our country the lustre of your genius, your capacity and your wisdom. But at that hour, I foresee, the path of your destiny divides. For when the years of your life have completed seven times eight circlings of the sun and those two numbers, each for a different reason, held to be perfect,<sup>16</sup> have fulfilled the sum allotted for you in the revolving ordained by fate, then the whole state will turn to you alone and to the name you bear. To you will turn the eyes of the senate, of all good citizens, allies and Latins, and you will be the man on whom alone the salvation of the state will depend. In a word, it will be your duty to bring back order in the state as dictator<sup>17</sup>—if only you escape the impious hands of your own kinsmen."<sup>18</sup> A cry burst from Laelius at this and deep groans from the others,<sup>19</sup> but Scipio, gently smiling, continued, "Hush, I beg of you! Do not rouse me from my sleep. Listen a while and hear the rest."

"But hold fast to this, Africanus, that you may be more eager to defend the state: For all those who have guarded, aided, and increased the welfare of their fatherland there is a place reserved in heaven, where they shall dwell in happiness forever. For to that all-ruling God whose power is over all that is there is nothing that is done on earth more acceptable than those meetings for conference of men joined together by the bond of law which are called states. Those who guide and preserve these have come from this heaven and to it they return."

At this, though I was filled with fear more at the thought of treachery from my own kin than by dread of death, I asked whether he and my father Paulus<sup>20</sup> and the others whom we deem to be dead were really living. "In all truth," said he, "they live, for they have made their escape from the fetters of the body as though out of a prison: it is that life of yours—you call it life—that is really death. Do you not see yonder your father Paulus coming to greet

15. the agrarian reformer Tiberius Gracchus, son of Africanus' daughter Cornelia. His land law (enacted in 133 B.C.) restricted the holdings of the wealthy families and provided for the resettlement of small landholders. His law marked the beginning of the century of internal struggle which was to end in the establishment of authoritarian power at Rome. Scipio is here made to speak of him from a conservative standpoint, which is in character, and was Cicero's own standpoint too.

16. Both these numbers were regarded as especially important in vari-

ous mystical and philosophical systems. Scipio is fifty-six years old at the imagined time of the dialogue.

17. a temporary constitutional office; in times of crisis the Senate appointed a dictator for a specific term.

18. Scipio died in 129 B.C. while trying to bring about a compromise between the two parties; there was a rumor that his death was the work of the partisans of Gracchus.

19. the audience to whom Scipio is talking.

20. Scipio's father won a decisive victory at Pydna, in Greece, in 168 B.C.

you?" When I saw him, I wept a flood of tears, but he embracing and kissing me bade me not to weep.

As soon as I could overcome my weeping and was able to speak I cried, "Tell me, best and most saintly of fathers, since here is life, as I hear Africanus say, why should I linger longer on earth? Why should I not make haste to join you here?" "That may not be," he replied, "for until that God, whose dominion is all that you can see, shall free you from the prison-house of the body, there can be for you no entrance here. For to men life has been given for this purpose, that they shall be care-takers of that sphere called the earth, which you see in the centre of this abode of the divine, and to them a soul has been given out of those never-dying fires which you call planets and stars, which, perfect in their form as spheres, are informed by souls divine and, in their orbits ordained, complete their courses with a motion marvellous in its swiftness. Therefore you, O Publius, and all good men must keep that soul in the guardianship of the body and must not seek to set forth from the life of men save at the bidding of him by whom it was entrusted to you, lest you be found to have fled from the trust imposed upon man by God.

"Rather do you, O Scipio, do as your grandfather here and as I who begat you have done: cherish righteousness and that loyalty, so greatly due to parents and kinsmen but most of all to one's fatherland. That is the life that is the road to the sky overhead and to this gathering of those whose life on earth has been lived. There are they who, lightened of the body's burden, now dwell in that place which you see yonder (it was a circle of light shining out with a radiant glory among the other fires) which you of earth call by a term learned from the Greeks, the Milky Way."

To me, as I surveyed from that point all that I could see, wondrous and glorious was the sight. There were those stars that we never see from the earth, all larger than we have ever imagined, of these the smallest was one farthest from heaven<sup>21</sup> and nearest to the earth, shining with a reflected light. Much larger than the earth were these starry spheres: to me the earth seemed so small in comparison that I felt ashamed of our empire which includes but a single point on its surface.

As I gazed more and more intently upon the earth, Africanus said, "Tell me, how long will your mind devote itself to the earth below? Do you not see into what lofty heights you have come? Before you are the nine circles or rather spheres which bind together all that is. Of these the outermost is that of the heavens, enclosing all the rest—the God supreme guarding and embracing all the other spheres; within it are included the stars in their courses,

21. the moon.

revolving without ceasing. Beneath it are the seven other spheres whirling in their course opposite to that of the heaven. Of these one is that which among men is called Saturn. Next comes that radiance so helpful and healthful to mankind that men call Jupiter. Beneath this, red and fearful to mankind, is the star that you call Mars. Next below, almost midway between heaven and earth, is the sun, the leader, chief and ruler of the other lights, the soul of the universe and its controlling power, of such greatness of size that he fills all things and floods them with his light. In his train as companions are the orbits of Venus and Mercury, and in the lowest of the spheres the moon revolves, lighted by the rays of the sun. But below this there is nothing that is not impermanent and doomed to die save only the souls bestowed by nature's gift on the race of men, while above all things are imperishable. For that central sphere the earth, which is the ninth, is motionless and of all things the lowest, and toward it all bodies tend because of their weight."

As I gazed with awe at these marvellous things I said as soon as I could recover from my amazement, "But what is that wondrous sound, so loud and sweet, that fills my ears?"

"That," said he, "is that harmony of the spheres, produced by the sweep of their onward motion, with the intervals between them unequal but composed, by the blending of notes high with low in exact proportion, to produce various harmonies. For not in silence can such mighty motions speed on their way, and it is nature's will that the lowest spheres sound forth in heaviest tones and those above in highest. So that this uppermost sphere of the heavens bearing the stars, since it revolves at greater speed, moves apace with notes of highest pitch, while that one of the moon, the lowest, gives out the lowest tones; for the earth, ninth of the spheres, remains without motion in its fixed place in the centre of the universe. But the other eight spheres, two of which move at the same rate,<sup>22</sup> send out seven different sounds,—that number which is the key of almost everything. It is this harmony that inspired men have reproduced both on strings and in songs and thus have won a return to this place, as have those others who during their life on earth have devoted outstanding gifts to the pursuit of things divine. To this music our human ears, though filled with it, have become deaf—for there is no duller sense in man than that of hearing. So it is that where the Nile falls headlong from those lofty mountains at the place called the Cataracts, the race of men that lives nearby has, because of the loudness of the sound, lost its power of hearing. So this sound so glorious, made by the revolving at the highest speed of the whole universe, cannot be heard by human ears, just

as you cannot look directly at the sun, since your sight is blinded by its radiance."

Though I marvelled at these things, I yet kept turning my eyes again and again back to the earth.

Then Africanus continued: "You are still, I see, fixing your eyes upon the abode and the home of men. If it seems a small thing, as it is, to you, keep rather your eyes upon these things of the heavens, scorning those of mankind. For what glory can you gain from what men say, what fame worth striving for? The earth, as you can see, is inhabited in but scattered parts and these small, while between those spots, as it were, where men dwell, stretch vast desert places. Those who inhabit the earth are from each other so widely apart that no word can spread from one group to another, for some live in parts slantwise,<sup>23</sup> others crosswise,<sup>24</sup> and some even opposite<sup>25</sup> to you; from these surely there is no glory that you can hope to have.

"You can see besides, that the earth is girdled and encircled by zones of a sort, of which the two that are farthest apart, supported by the opposite poles of the sky, are both held fast in bonds of ice, while that middle and widest one is scorched by the blazing heat of the sun. Two of the zones are fit for habitation; of these the southern, where men dwell whose footprints press against yours, has no concern for you; while if you consider this northern one inhabited by you, see how small a part of it belongs to you. For that whole stretch of earth which you hold, narrow from north to south and wider from east to west, is in fact only a small island surrounded by that sea which you call the Atlantic, the Great Sea, or the Ocean. See how small it is, in spite of its lordly name. Do you suppose that your name or that of anyone of our people has ever passed from those lands that are cultivated and known to us and scaled the Caucasus which you see there, or crossed beyond the Ganges? Who among those who dwell in those remote lands of the rising or the setting sun, or of the farthest north or south will ever hear your name? With these left out you see, surely, within what narrow limits the fame for which you long can spread. And how long will even those who now speak about you continue to do so?

"Why, even if generations yet to be should want to pass on to those yet unborn the praises of anyone of us received from their fathers, still, because of the floods and conflagrations that are bound at certain intervals to happen on the earth, we could not count upon a long-lasting fame among men, much less an endless one. Yet how much does it concern you to be spoken of by those who come after you when you have never been mentioned by those who have lived before you?

23. in the opposite (southern) temperate zone of the same hemisphere.

24. in the same (northern) temperate

zone of the opposite hemisphere.

25. in the opposite temperate zone of the opposite hemisphere.

"Indeed they were not fewer than the men of now and surely were better; especially since not one of those by whom our names can now be heard will, after a year has passed, have any memory of it. For men generally reckon a year by the circling of only one of the stars, that is, the sun: but when all the stars have come back to the point where they started and have, at long intervals, restored the same arrangement of the whole heavens, then comes about that which can truly be called a completed year.<sup>26</sup> How many generations of men are included in such a year I would not venture to say. For as the sun seemed to men to fail of its light and to be eclipsed at the hour when the soul of Romulus<sup>27</sup> made its way to these shining heights, so when the sun shall again be eclipsed at the same point and the same hour, then, since all the planets and stars will have returned to their starting point you can be assured that such a year has been completed. But you may be sure that one twentieth<sup>28</sup> of such a year has not yet passed.

"If, therefore, you despair of a return to this place where all belongs to great and noble men, of what worth, I ask you, is that fame of yours among men? It can hardly extend to the smallest part of a single year. So if you will but fix your gaze on things on high and on this eternal home and dwelling-place, you will cease to listen to the talking of the common herd, nor will you longer put your trust in the rewards that men can bestow for what you have done; let rather the charm of virtue itself lead you on to the only true glory; whatever men may say of you leave to them; they will say it anyway, and all that they have to say will be confined within those narrow limits which you see: all that they say about any man has not been for long, for it dies with them and is blotted out by the forgetfulness of those who come after them." As he said this, "If it is true, Africanus," said I, "that for those who have well served their country there lies open a path to heaven here, then, though from my boyhood I have tried to follow in the footsteps of my father and of you and to be worthy of your fame, now indeed with such a reward before my eyes I shall strive with even greater zeal." "Strive on," said he, "and be assured that you are not, though your body is, born but to die; for that form which your body shows is not your true self: the spirit within each man is the man himself—not the bodily form to which one can point. Know then that you are divine, for that is divine which throbs with life, feels, remembers, foresees, which rules, controls, and makes to move the body over which it has been placed in charge; as over this universe rules that supreme

26. reckoned by ancient authorities at from twelve thousand to fifteen thousand years.

27. the traditional founder of the city of Rome; the legendary date of his

death is 716 B.C.

28. from the death of Romulus to the supposed time of Scipio's dream is 567 years.

God; so this mortal body is made to move by a deathless soul within.

"For that which is ever in motion is eternal, but that which sets in motion something else but is itself moved by a force outside it, must needs, when the cause of its motion ends, cease to live. Only that therefore which gives itself motion ceases not to move, since it never abandons itself: more than that, it is for all other things that move, the first cause and beginning of their motion. Of a first cause there is of course no beginning, for it is from this first cause that all things begin, while it can never take its beginning from anything else; for it would not be a first cause if it found its beginning outside itself. Moreover because it never had a beginning it will never have an end. For if a first cause were destroyed it could never be born again from anything else, nor could it create another thing from itself, since only from a first cause must everything begin to be. So it follows that motion must begin from that which is self-moving: this can neither be born nor die: otherwise all heaven above would fall and all nature cease to be since they are endowed with no power from which they can receive a beginning of motion.

"Since then that which is self-moving is everlasting, who would dare deny that this is the essential nature given to living spirits? For everything that is set in motion by an outside force is without a spirit within it, but that which is animated by spirit is moved by its own power within, for this is the essential property and power of spirit,—which, since it is the only thing among all things that moves itself, cannot have had a beginning nor can it ever have an end. Devote this, then, to the highest tasks! Of these surely the noblest are those on behalf of one's fatherland: a spirit dedicated and devoted to these will swiftly wing its way to this, its own abode and home. And more swiftly will it speed here if, while still prisoned in the body, it soars above it and fixing its gaze on things beyond, it rids itself as much as is in its power from the body. The souls of those, however, who have surrendered to the pleasures of the body as slaves to them and who at the bidding of desires of the body have transgressed the laws of gods and men, when they have left their bodies, flit about the earth below, and do not return to this place until after they have, through many ages, suffered retribution." He left me then, and I awoke from my sleep.



VIRGIL  
(70-19 B.C.)  
The Aeneid\*

Book I

I tell about war and the hero who first from Troy's frontier,  
Displaced by destiny, came to the Lavinian shores,  
To Italy—a man much travailed on sea and land  
By the powers above, because of the brooding anger of Juno,  
Suffering much in war until he could found a city 5  
And march his gods into Latium, whence rose the Latin race,  
The royal line of Alba and the high walls of Rome.  
Where lay the cause of it all? How was her godhead injured?  
What grievance made the queen of heaven so harry a man  
Renowned for piety, through such toils, such a cycle of calamity? 10  
Can a divine being be so persevering in anger?  
There was a town of old—men from Tyre colonised it—  
Over against Italy and Tiber mouth, but afar off,  
Carthage, rich in resources, fiercely efficient in warfare.  
This town, they say, was Juno's favourite dwelling, preferred 15  
To all lands, even Samos: here were her arms, her chariot:  
And even from the long-ago time she cherished the aim that this  
Should be, if fate allowed, the metropolis of all nations.  
Nevertheless, she had heard a future race was forming  
Of Trojan blood, which one day would topple that Tyrian strong-  
hold— 20

A people arrogant in war, born to be everywhere rulers  
And root up her Libyan empire—so the Destiny-Spinners planned.

\* Abridged. Left unfinished when the poet died in 19 B.C. Our text is from *The Aeneid of Virgil*, translated by C. Day Lewis, copyright 1952 by C. Day Lewis, reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.

1. *the hero*: Aeneas, one of the Trojan champions in the fight for Troy, son of Aphrodite (Venus) and Anchises, a member of the royal house of Troy. Aeneas survived the fall of the city and set off in search of another home. After years of wandering he settled in Italy, and from his line sprang, in the fullness of time, the founders of Rome.

2. *Lavinian shores*: the west coast of Italy in the vicinity of Rome, named after the nearby city of Lavinium. Lavinia is the name of the Italian princess whom Aeneas is eventually to marry.

4. *Juno*: the Latin equivalent of

Hera, wife of the ruler of the gods, Zeus (Jupiter, the "Juppiter" of this translation). As in the *Iliad*, she is a bitter enemy of the Trojans.

6. *Latium*: the coastal plain on which Rome is situated.

7. *Alba*: The city of Alba Longa was to be founded by Aeneas' son Ascanius, and from it were to come Romulus and Remus, the builders of Rome.

14. *Carthage*: founded in North Africa by the Phoenicians who came from Tyre and Sidon in Palestine. It was their chief colony in the western Mediterranean. In the third and second centuries B.C. Carthage fought a series of bitter wars against Rome for the domination of the area.

16. *Samos*: Greek island in the Aegean, famous as a center for the worship of Hera (Juno).

22. *Libyan*: African. *Destiny-Spinners*: the Fates.

Juno, afraid of this, and remembering well the old war  
Wherein she had championed the Greeks whom she loved against  
the Trojans—

Besides, she has other reasons for rage, bitter affronts 25

Unblotted as yet from her heart: deep in her mind rankle

The judgment of Paris, the insult of having her beauty scorned,

Her hate for Troy's origin, Ganymede taken and made a favourite—

Furious at these things too, she tossed all over the sea

The Trojans, the few that the Greeks and relentless Achilles had  
left, 30

And rode them off from their goal, Latium. Many years

They were wandering round the seven seas, moved on by destiny.

So massive a task it was to found the Roman race.

[The story opens with a storm, provoked by Juno's agency, which scatters Aeneas' fleet off Sicily and separates him from his companions. He lands on the African coast near Carthage. Setting out with his friend Achates to explore the country, he meets his mother, Venus, who tells him that the rest of his ships are safe and directs him to the city just founded by Dido, the queen of Carthage. Venus surrounds Aeneas and Achates with a mist so that they can see without being seen.]

Meanwhile the two pressed on apace, where the track pointed.

And now they were climbing a hill whose massive bulk looms over

The city and commands a prospect of soaring towers. 420

Aeneas marvels at great buildings, where once were shanties,

Marvels at city gates and the din of the paved streets.

The Tyrians are busy at work there, some extending the walls,

Manhandling blocks of stone and building the citadel,

Others choosing a site for a house and trenching foundations: 425

Laws are being made, magistrates and a parliament elected:

Here they dig out a harbour basin; here they are laying

Foundations deep for a theatre, and hewing from stone immense

Columns to grace one day a tall proscenium.

So in the youth of summer throughout the flowering land 430

The bees pursue their labours under the sun: they lead

A young brood from the hive, or press the flowing honey

And fill the cells to bursting with a delicious nectar;

Relieve incoming bees of their burden, or closing ranks

Shoo the drones, that work-shy gang, away from the bee-folds. 435

27. *judgment of Paris*: Paris, son to King Priam of Troy, was chosen to judge which was the most beautiful goddess—Hera, Aphrodite, or Athene. All three attempted to bribe him, but Aphrodite's promise, the love of Helen, prevailed, and he awarded her the prize.

28. *Ganymede*: a beautiful Trojan boy taken up into heaven by Jupiter.

418. *The two*: Aeneas and his companion, Achates.

423. *Tyrians*: Phoenicians, Carthaginians.

The work goes on like wild-fire, the honey smells of thyme.

"Ah, fortunate you are, whose town is already building!"

Aeneas said, and gazed up at the city's heights.

Then, in his cloak of darkness he went—a miraculous thing—

Into their midst and joined the crowds, but none perceived him.

There was a grove, most genial its shade, at the city centre,  
Just where the Carthaginians, after their rough passage,  
First dug and found the sign which royal Juno had promised—  
The skull of a spirited horse; it was a sign that henceforth  
Their nation would thrive in wealth and war throughout the  
ages.

Dido was building here, in Juno's honour, a huge  
Temple, made rich by offerings and the indwelling presence of Juno:  
Bronze was its threshold, approached by a flight of steps; the door-  
posts

Were braced with bronze, and the door with its grinding hinges  
was bronze.

This grove had seen Dido's fear allayed by a chance of renewal  
For the first time; and here Aeneas first dared to hope for  
Salvation and believe that at last his luck was turning.  
For, while he awaited the queen and his eyes roved over the detail  
Of that immense façade, amazed by the town's good fortune,  
Admiring the skill of the rival craftsmen, the scope of their  
work,

He noticed a series of frescoes depicting the Trojan war,  
Whose fame had already gone round the world; the sons of Atreus  
Were there, and Priam, Achilles too, hostile to both.

Aeneas stood; wept:—

Oh, Achates, is there anywhere,

Any place left on earth unhaunted by our sorrows?

Look!—Priam. Here too we find virtue somehow rewarded,  
Tears in the nature of things, hearts touched by human transience.  
Then cast off fear; the fame of our deeds will ensure your welfare.

He spoke, and fed his soul on those insubstantial figures,  
Heavily sighing, the large tears rivering down his cheeks.  
Pictured there, he beheld scenes of the fight round Troy—  
Here the Greeks fled with the Trojan warriors hard behind them,  
Here fled the Trojans before the chariot of plumed Achilles.  
He recognised through his tears, not far away, the snow-white  
Tents of Rhesus taken by surprise, while all slept deep,

444. *skull of a . . . horse*: a sign that they were to be a warlike race and inhabit a rich land (one that could support horses).

470. *Rhesus*: king of Thrace, who

came to the help of Troy just before the end of the war. An oracle proclaimed that if his horses ate Trojan grass and drank the water of the river Xanthus, Troy would not fall. Odysseus

And wrecked with terrible slaughter by Diomed, man of blood,  
 And Diomed driving away to his camp the fiery horses  
 Before they could graze the meadows of Troy or drink the Xanthus.  
 Another scene was of Troilus in flight, his weapons gone  
 (Unhappy the lad, unequal the fight with Achilles): his horses 475  
 Are bolting; heels over head he hangs backwards out of the chariot,  
 Yet gripping the reins; his neck and his hair are being dragged along  
 Over the ground, and his trailing spearpoint scribbles in the dust.  
 Meanwhile to the shrine of their goddess, their foe's friend, the  
 Trojan women

Are walking to make intercession: their hair is unbound, they  
 carry 480

The goddess' ritual robe, they mourn and beat their breasts:  
 But the goddess keeps her eyes on the ground and regards them not.  
 Thrice round the walls of Troy Achilles has dragged Hector  
 And now is demanding a ransom of gold for the lifeless body.  
 At this point Aeneas uttered a deep groan 485

To see the spoils, the chariot, the actual body of  
 His friend, and Priam's defenceless hands stretched out to Achilles.  
 He noticed himself, too, in the forefront of the battle,  
 Noticed the Aethiopian brigade and the arms of black Memnon;  
 Picked out Penthesilea leading the crescent shields of 490  
 The Amazons and storming through the mêlée like a fire,  
 Her bare breast thrusting out over the golden girdle,  
 A warrior queen, a girl who braved heroes in combat.

Now while Aeneas viewed with wonder all these scenes,  
 And stood at gaze, rooted in a deep trance of attention, 495  
 There came in royal state to the temple, a crowd of courtiers  
 Attending her, queen Dido, most beautiful to see.  
 As, by the banks of Eurotas or over the Cynthian slopes  
 Diana foots the dance, and a thousand Orcads following  
 Weave a constellation around that arrowy one, 500  
 Who in grace of movement excels all goddesses,  
 And happiness runs through the still heart of Latona—  
 So Dido was, even so she went her radiant way  
 Through the crowds, eager to forward the work and growth of her  
 realm.

Now, at the holy doors, under the temple porch, 505  
 Hedged by the spears of her guard, she throned herself on high;

and Diomed went into the Trojan lines  
 at night, killed the king, and stole the  
 horses.

474. *Troilus*: a son of Priam.

479-482. *Meanwhile . . . not*: Compare this scene with the *Iliad*, Book VI, ll. 297-311.

489. *Memnon*: king of the Aethioplans, who fought on the Trojan side.

490. *Penthesilea*: queen of the Amazons, killed by Achilles.

498. *Eurotas*: a river near Sparta where Artemis (Diana) was worshiped. *Cynthian*: Cynthus is a mountain on the island of Delos, Diana's birthplace.

499. *Orcads*: mountain nymphs.

502. *Latona*: mother of Diana.

Gave laws and ordinances, appointed the various tasks  
 In equitable proportions or else by drawing lots.  
 Just then, all of a sudden, Aeneas saw approaching  
 Amid the multitude Antheus, Sergestus, valiant 510  
 Cloanthus and other Trojans, whom the black hurricane  
 Had sundered at sea and driven afar to different beaches.  
 He and Achatas together were thrilled through, were dumbfounded  
 With anxious joy: they eagerly yearned to join hands with their  
 friends,

But the mystery of the whole affair disquieted them. 515  
 So they keep dark, and peering out from their womb of cloud,  
 Speculate what befell these friends, where their ships are beached,  
 Why they are here: for spokesmen from each of the ships were  
 coming

To sue the queen's favour, and shouting aloud as they neared the  
 temple.

When they had entered and Dido had granted to them an  
 audience, 520

The eldest, Ilioneus, began in collected tones:—

O queen, who, under God, have founded a new city  
 And curbed the arrogance of proud clans with your justice,  
 We hapless Trojans, wanderers over a world of seas,  
 Implore you, stop your people from wickedly burning our ships. 525  
 God-fearing men we are. Incline your heart to spare us.  
 We are not come as pirates to waste your Libyan homes  
 With the sword, and carry down their plunder to the beaches.  
 We've no mind for marauding; the conquered lack such effrontery.  
 There is a place—the Greeks call it Hesperia— 530  
 An antique land, well warded, possessed of a rich soil:  
 Oenotrians colonised it; whose heirs, so rumour says now,  
 Have named it, after their first founder, Italy.

That was our bourne. . . .

But rainy Orion rose, and the sea got up of a sudden: 535  
 We drove on chartless shoals, the winds wantonly pitched us  
 Far apart on the deep amid toppling waves and unchannelled  
 Reefs. A handful of us have drifted to your shores.

What manner of men are these? What land is this that allows them  
 Such barbarous ways? They bar us even from the sanctuary 540  
 Of the sands: they threaten, and forbid us to touch the hem of  
 their country.

If humankind and mortal arms mean nothing to you,

510–511. *Antheus* . . . *Cloanthus*:  
 Aeneas' captains from whom he had  
 been parted by the storm.

516. *womb of cloud*: Aeneas' mother,  
 Venus, has enfolded Aeneas and Achatas  
 in a cloud, so that they are invisible.

530. *Hesperia*: Italy, literally, "the  
 western country."

532. *Oenotrians*: the original in-  
 habitants of Italy.

533. *first founder*: Italus.

Think of the gods—they do not forget good deeds and bad.  
 Aeneas was our king: never was a man more just,  
 More duteous of heart, more adept in warlike arts, than he. 545  
 If destiny has preserved him, if still he breathes the air  
 Of day, and is not sleeping in death's unwelcome shade,  
 We need not fear; and you should have no cause to regret  
 That you were prompt to aid us. In Sicily, too, we have towns  
 And resources, and noble Acestes who comes of Trojan stock. 550  
 We pray you, let us lay up the vessels the storm shattered,  
 And shape new oars and timbers for them out of your forests;  
 So that, if we are meant to get back our friends and our king  
 And make for Italy, to Italy we may go;  
 But if that hope is lost—if the Libyan sea has drowned you, 555  
 Lord Aeneas, and there's no future in Iulus—  
 We may at least sail back to our last port of call, to Sicily,  
 Where homes are ready for us, and make Acestes our king.

Ilioneus stopped speaking. A shout of assent rose from  
 The Trojans all. . . . 560  
 Then Dido, with her eyes downcast, addressed them briefly:—

Trojans, put fear away from your hearts and forget your troubles!  
 Mine's a hard task, with a young country: that's why I have to  
 Do such things, to guard my frontiers everywhere.

Who has not heard of Troy and the men of Aeneas—their  
 manly 565

Virtues, and all that famous conflagration of war?  
 We Carthaginians are not so insensitive of heart,  
 Nor is our city quite so out of the way or benighted.  
 Whether your choice is great Hesperia, land of Saturn,  
 Or you decide upon Sicily and king Acestes, 570  
 I will give you an escort there and what provision you need.  
 Or would you like to share my kingdom, on equal terms?  
 This city I am building—it's yours: draw up your ships, then;  
 There shall be no preference, I say, between you and us.

Oh, if only your king, Aeneas himself, could come here, 575  
 Fetched by the same storm. Well, I will send couriers abroad  
 With orders to comb the furthest corners of Libya, in case  
 He is wandering somewhere, in woods or towns, a castaway.

Arrested by Dido's words, Aeneas and brave Achates  
 For some time now had been on fire to slough off their cloak 580  
 Of darkness. Achates first spoke urgently to Aeneas:—

Tell me, goddess-born, what idea forms in your mind now.  
 All is saved, you can see, our fleet and our friends restored to us.

556. *Iulus*: Ascanius, Aeneas' son.

569. *Saturn*: An old legend connected Italy with Saturn (Cronos), the father of Jupiter (Zeus). The "age of

Saturn" was the Golden Age.

570. *Acestes*: a Sicilian king; his mother was a Trojan, and he had offered Aeneas a home in his dominions.

One only is missing, and him we saw drowned in the welter  
Before our eyes: all else bears out what your mother told us. 585

These words were hardly spoken, when in a flash the cloud-cloak  
They wore was shredded and purged away into pure air.  
Aeneas was standing there in an aura of brilliant light,  
Godlike of face and figure: for Venus herself had breathed  
Beauty upon his head and the roscate sheen of youth on 590  
His manhood and a gallant light into his eyes;  
As an artist's hand adds grace to the ivory he works on,  
As silver or marble when they're plated with yellow gold.  
So then Aeneas addressed the queen, and startling them all  
At once began:—

I am here, before you, the one you look for, 595  
Trojan Aeneas, saved from the Libyan sea.  
O lady, you alone have pitied the tragic ordeal  
Of Troy, and now you offer to share your home and city  
With us, the remnant of Troy—men utterly spent by  
Every disaster on land and sea, deprived of everything. 600  
Dido, we have not the means to repay your goodness, nor have  
Any of our kin, wherever they are, scattered over the world.  
If angels there be who look after the good, if indeed just dealing  
And minds informed with the right mean anything to heaven,  
May God reward you as you deserve! What happy age, 605  
What great parentage was it gave life to the like of you?  
So long as rivers run to the sea, and shadows wheel round  
The hollows of the hills, and star-flocks browse in the sky,  
Your name, your fame, your glory shall perish not from the land  
Wherever I am summoned to go.

He spoke: he stretched out 610  
His right hand to Ilioneus, his friend, and his left to Serestus,  
Then to others, brave Gyas and brave Cloanthus.

Sidonian Dido, amazed first by the man's appearance  
Then by the magnitude of his downfall, thus addressed him:—

O goddess-born, what doom is pursuing you through so many 615  
Hazards? What violent fate casts you on this harsh coast?  
Are you the famed Aeneas, whom gentle Venus bore  
To Trojan Anchises by the waters of Simois?  
Indeed I well recollect Teucer coming to Sidon,  
An exile from his homeland, and seeking a new kingdom 620  
With the help of Belus: at that time Belus, my father, was sacking  
Rich Cyprus and holding the island down in subjection to him.  
Now from that time I have known about the fall of Troy,

584. *him we saw drowned*: One ship, captained by Orontes, was sunk in the storm in sight of Aeneas.

619. *Teucer*: a Greek warrior who fought at Troy and afterward was exiled from his home. He founded a city on the island of Cyprus.

And known your name, Aeneas, and the kings who led the Greeks.  
 Even their enemy held the Trojans in high esteem 625  
 And claimed blood kinship with the ancient line of Troy.  
 So, gentlemen, do not hesitate to come under my roof.  
 I too have gone through much; like you, have been roughly handled  
 By fortune; but now at last it has willed me to settle here.  
 Being acquainted with grief, I am learning to help the unlucky.

She spoke: she led Aeneas into the royal palace, 631  
 And ordered a thanksgiving service to be held in the gods' temple.  
 Besides, she sent to his companions on the shore  
 Twenty bulls, a hundred head of bristle-backed swine,  
 A hundred fatted lambs together with their ewes, 635  
 And the good cheer of the Wine-god.  
 Within, the palace was being arrayed in all the glitter  
 Of regal luxury, and a banquet being made ready:  
 Richly embroidered the hangings of princely purple; a service  
 Of solid silver on the tables; and golden vessels chased 640  
 With the legends of family history—a long lineage of glory  
 Traced through many heroes right from its earliest source. . . .

[At the banquet which Dido gives for Aeneas, he relates, at her request, the story of the fall of Troy (Book II) and of his wanderings in search of a new home (Book III). Dido, already falling in love with him before the banquet (through the intervention of Venus and Juno, who both promote the affair, each for different reasons), now feels the full force of her passion for Aeneas.]

#### Book IV

But now for some while the queen had been growing more grievously love-sick,  
 Feeding the wound with her life-blood, the fire biting within her.  
 Much did she muse on the hero's nobility, and much  
 On his family's fame. His look, his words had gone to her heart  
 And lodged there: she could get no peace from love's disquiet. 5  
 The morrow's morn had chased from heaven the dewy darkness,  
 Was carrying the sun's torch far and wide over earth,  
 When, almost beside herself, she spoke to her sister, her confidante:—

Anna, sister, why do these nerve-racking dreams haunt me?  
 This man, this stranger I've welcomed into my house—what of him? 10

How gallantly he looks, how powerful in chest and shoulders!  
 I really do think, and have reason to think, that he is heaven-born.  
 Mean souls convict themselves by cowardice. Oh, imagine  
 The fates that have harried him, the fight to a finish he told of!



Were it not that my purpose is fixed irrevocably 15  
 Never to tie myself in wedlock again to anyone,  
 Since that first love of mine proved false and let death cheat me;  
 Had I not taken a loathing for the idea of marriage,  
 For him, for this one man, I could perhaps have weakened.  
 Anna, I will confess it, since poor Sychaeus, my husband, 20  
 Was killed and our home broken up by my brother's murderous act,  
 This man is the only one who has stirred my senses and sapped  
 My will. I feel once more the scars of the old flame.  
 But no, I would rather the earth should open and swallow me  
 Or the Father of heaven strike me with lightning down to the  
 shades— 25

The pale shades and deep night of the Underworld—before  
 I violate or deny pure widowhood's claim upon me.  
 He who first wedded me took with him, when he died,  
 My right to love: let him keep it, there, in the tomb, for ever.

So Dido spoke, and the rising tears flooded her bosom. 30  
 Anna replied:—

You are dearer to me than the light of day.  
 Must you go on wasting your youth in mourning and solitude,  
 Never to know the blessings of love, the delight of children?  
 Do you think that ashes, or ghosts underground, can mind about  
 such things?

I know that in Libya, yes, and in Tyre before it, no wooers 35  
 Could touch your atrophied heart: Iarbas was rejected  
 And other lords of Africa, the breeding-ground of the great.  
 Very well: but when love comes, and pleases, why fight against it?  
 Besides, you should think of the nations whose land you have  
 settled in—

Threatening encirclement are the Gaetuli, indomitable 40  
 In war, the Numidians (no bridle for them), the unfriendly Syrtis;  
 On your other frontier, a waterless desert and the far-raging  
 Barcaei: I need not mention the prospect of Tyrian aggression,  
 Your brother's menacing attitude.  
 I hold it was providential indeed, and Juno willed it, 45  
 That hither the Trojan fleet should have made their way. Oh, sister,  
 Married to such a man, what a city you'll see, what a kingdom  
 Established here! With the Trojans as our comrades in arms,  
 What heights of glory will not we Carthaginians soar to!

17. *first love of mine*: Her first husband, Sychaeus, was murdered by Pygmalion, king of Tyre, Dido's brother. Her husband's ghost warned her in a dream to leave Tyre and seek a new home.

36. *Iarbas*: the most prominent of Dido's African suitors.

40. *Gaetuli*: a savage African people living southwest of Carthage.

41. *Numidian*: the most powerful of the local tribes. *Syrtis*: on the coast to the west.

43. *Barcaei*: to the east.

44. *Your brother's*: The reference is to Pygmalion of Tyre, from whom Dido fled to found Carthage.

Only solicit the gods' favour, perform the due rites, 50  
 And plying our guest with attentions, spin a web to delay him,  
 While out at sea the winter runs wild and Orion is stormy,  
 While his ships are in bad repair, while the weather is unacquiescent.

These words blew to a blaze the spark of love in the queen's heart,  
 Set hope to her wavering will and melted her modesty's rigour. 55  
 So first they went to the shrines, beseeching at every altar  
 For grace: as religion requires, they sacrificed chosen sheep to  
 Ceres, giver of increase, to Phoebus, and to the Wine-god;  
 To Juno, chief of all, for the marriage-bond is her business.  
 Dido herself, most beautiful, chalice in hand, would pour 60  
 Libations between the horns of a milk-white heifer, and slowly  
 Would pace by the dripping altars, with the gods looking on,  
 And daily renew her sacrifice, poring over the victims'  
 Opened bodies to see what their pulsing entrails signified.  
 Ah, little the soothsayers know! What value have vows or  
 shrines 65

For a woman wild with passion, the while love's flame eats into  
 Her gentle flesh and love's wound works silently in her breast?  
 So burns the ill-starred Dido, wandering at large through the town  
 In a rage of desire, like a doe pierced by an arrow—a doe which  
 Some hunting shepherd has hit with a long shot while unwary 70  
 She stepped through the Cretan woods, and all unknowing has left  
 his

Winged weapon within her: the doe runs fleetly around the Dictæan  
 Woods and clearings, the deathly shaft stuck deep in her flank.  
 Now she conducts Acneas on a tour of her city, and shows him  
 The vast resources of Carthage, the home there ready and wait-  
 ing; 75

Begins to speak, then breaks off, leaving a sentence unfinished.  
 Now, as the day draws out, she wants to renew that first feast,  
 In fond distraction begs to hear once again the Trojan  
 Story, and hangs on his words as once again he tells it.  
 Then, when the company's broken up, when the moon is dim-  
 ming 80

Her beams in turn and the dipping stars invite to sleep,  
 Alone she frets in the lonely house, lies down on her bed,

58. *Ceres*: goddess of the crops. Ceres, the Wine-god, and Phoebus Apollo are selected as deities especially connected with the founding of cities; one of Apollo's titles is "Founder," and Ceres and Dionysus (Bacchus) control the essential crops which will enable the colonists to live. Dido prays to these gods at the moment when she is

about to abandon her responsibilities as founder of a city; a similar irony is present in her prayer to Juno, whose "business" is the marriage-bond, at the moment when she is about to break her long fidelity to the memory of Sychæus.  
 72. *Dictæan*: Dictæ is a mountain in Crete.

Then leaves it again: he's not there, not there, but she hears him  
and sees him.

Or charmed by his likeness to his father, she keeps Ascanius  
Long in her lap to assuage the passion she must not utter. 85  
Work on the half-built towers is closed down meanwhile; the men  
Of Carthage have laid off drilling, or building the wharves and vital  
Defences of their town; the unfinished works are idle—  
Great frowning walls, head-in-air cranes, all at a standstill.

[Juno proposes to Venus that Dido and Aeneas be married,  
which would guarantee the unity of Carthage and Troy and peace  
between Juno and Venus. Her aim is of course to ensure that the  
imperial destiny reserved for Rome be transferred to Carthage.  
Venus, confident of the future, which has been explained to her by  
Juppiter, consents to the scheme. Dido organizes a hunt, which is  
broken up by a storm, and Dido and Aeneas take shelter in a cave,  
where their love is consummated. There is no formal marriage, but  
Dido henceforth feels justified in assuming the dignity and rights  
of a wife. Their love is rumored abroad, and when the African  
prince Iarbas hears of it, he appeals to Juppiter for satisfaction.]

Thus did Iarbas pray, with his hands on the altar; and Jove  
Omnipotent, hearing him, bent down his gaze upon Dido's 220  
City and on those lovers lost to their higher fame.  
Then he addressed Mercury, entrusting to him this errand:—

Go quick, my son, whistle up the Zephyrs and wing your way  
Down to the Trojan leader, who is dallying now in Carthage  
Without one thought for the city which fate has assigned to be  
his. 225

Carry my dictate along the hastening winds and tell him,  
Not for such ways did his matchless mother guarantee him  
To us, nor for such ends rescue him twice from the Greeks;  
Rather, that he should rule an Italy fertile in leadership  
And loud with war, should hand on a line which sprang from the  
noble 230

Teucer and bring the whole world under a system of law.  
If the glory of such great exploits no longer fires his heart  
And for his own renown he will make no effort at all,  
Does he grudge his son, Ascanius, the glory of Rome to be?  
What aim, what hope does he cherish, delaying there in a hos-  
tile 235

Land, with no thought for posterity or his Italian kingdom?

222. *Mercury*: the Latin equivalent  
of the Greek *Hermes*, the divine  
messenger.

228. *rescue him*: during the sack of

Troy (Book II).

231. *Teucer*: the first of the Trojan  
kings; to be distinguished from the  
Teucer of Book I, l. 619.

Let him sail. That is the gist. Give him that message from me.

Jove spake. Mercury now got ready to obey  
His father's command. So first he bound on his feet the sandals,  
The golden sandals whose wings waft him aloft over sea 240  
And land alike with the hurrying breath of the breezes. Then  
He took up his magic wand (with this he summons wan ghosts  
From Orcus and consigns others to dreary Tartarus,  
Gives sleep or takes it away, seals up the eyes of dead men).  
Now, with that trusty wand, he drove the winds and threshed  
through 245

The cloud-wrack; descried as he flew the peak and precipitous  
flanks of

Atlas, that dour mountain which props the sky with his summit—  
Atlas, his pine-bristled head for ever wrapped in a bandeau  
Of glooming cloud, for ever beaten by wind and rain;  
Snow lies deep on his shoulders, and watercourses plunge down 250  
That ancient's chin, while his shaggy beard is stiff with ice.  
Here first did Mercury pause, hovering on beautifully-balanced  
Wings; then stooped, dived bodily down to the sea below,  
Like a bird which along the shore and around the promontories  
Goes fishing, flying low, wave-hopping over the water. 255

Even so did Mercury skim between earth and sky  
Towards the Libyan coast, cutting his path through the winds,  
On his way from that mountain giant, Atlas, his mother's sire.  
As soon as his winged feet had carried him to the shacks there,  
He noticed Aeneas superintending the work on towers 260  
And new buildings: he wore a sword studded with yellow  
Jaspers, and a fine cloak of glowing Tyrian purple  
Hung from his shoulders—the wealthy Dido had fashioned it,  
Interweaving the fabric with threads of gold, as a present for him.  
Mercury went for him at once:—

So now you are laying 265  
Foundations for lofty Carthage, building a beautiful city  
To please a woman, lost to the interests of your own realm?  
The king of the gods, who directs heaven and earth with his deity,  
Sends me to you from bright Olympus: the king of the gods  
Gave me this message to carry express through the air:—What do  
you 270

Aim at or hope for, idling and fiddling here in Libya?  
If you're indifferent to your own high destiny  
And for your own renown you will make no effort at all,  
Think of your young hopeful, Ascanius, growing to manhood,

243. *Orcus*: the abode of the dead.  
*Tartarus*: the place of punishment of  
the wicked in the lower world.

247. *Atlas*: mountain range in west-  
ern North Africa.

The inheritance which you owe him—an Italian kingdom, the soil  
of  
Rome. 275

Such were the words which Mercury delivered;  
And breaking off abruptly, was manifest no more,  
But vanished into thin air, far beyond human ken.

Dazed indeed by that vision was Aeneas, and dumbfounded:  
His hair stood on end with terror, the voice stuck in his throat. 280  
Awed by this admonition from the great throne above,  
He desired to fly the country, dear though it was to him.  
But oh, what was he to do? What words could he find to get round  
The temperamental queen? How broach the matter to her?  
His mind was in feverish conflict, tossed from one side to the  
other, 285

Twisting and turning all ways to find a way past his dilemma.  
So vacillating, at last he felt this the better decision:—  
Sending for Mnesteus, Sergestus and brave Serestus, he bade them  
Secretly get the ships ready, muster their friends on the beach,  
Be prepared to fight: the cause of so drastic a change of plan 290  
They must keep dark: in the meanwhile, assuming that generous  
Dido

Knew nothing and could not imagine the end of so great a love,  
Aeneas would try for a way to approach her, the kindest moment  
For speaking, the best way to deal with this delicate matter. His  
comrades

Obedyed the command and did as he told them with cheerful  
alacrity. 295

But who can ever hoodwink a woman in love? The queen,  
Apprehensive even when things went well, now sensed his de-  
ception,

Got wind of what was going to happen. That mischievous Rumour,  
Whispering the fleet was preparing to sail, put her in a frenzy.

Distraught, she witlessly wandered about the city, raving 300

Like some Bacchante driven wild, when the emblems of sanctity  
Stir, by the shouts of "Hail, Bacchus!" and drawn to Cithaeron  
At night by the din of revellers, at the triennial orgies.

Finding Aeneas at last, she cried, before he could speak:—

Unfaithful man, did you think you could do such a dreadful  
thing 305

And keep it dark? yes, skulk from my land without one word?  
Our love, the vows you made me—do these not give you pause,  
Nor even the thought of Dido meeting a painful death?

301. *Bacchante*: a female devotee of  
the god Dionysus (Bacchus), in an  
ecstatic trance at the Dionysian festival,

which was held every three years.  
302. *Cithaeron*: mountain near  
Thebes, sacred to Dionysus.

Now, in the dead of winter, to be getting your ships ready  
 And hurrying to set sail when northerly gales are blowing, 310  
 You heartless one! Suppose the fields were not foreign, the home  
 was

Not strange that you are bound for, suppose Troy stood as of old,  
 Would you be sailing for Troy, now, in this stormy weather?  
 Am I your reason for going? By these tears, by the hand you gave  
 me—

They are all I have left, to-day, in my misery—I implore you, 315  
 And by our union of hearts, by our marriage hardly begun,  
 If I have ever helped you at all, if anything  
 About me please you, be sad for our broken home, forgo  
 Your purpose, I beg you, unless it's too late for prayers of mine!  
 Because of you, the Libyan tribes and the Nomad chieftains 320  
 Hate me, the Tyrians are hostile: because of you I have lost  
 My old reputation for faithfulness—the one thing that could have  
 made me

Immortal. Oh, I am dying! To what, my guest, are you leaving me?  
 “Guest”—that is all I may call you now, who have called you hus-  
 band.

Why do I linger here? Shall I wait till my brother, Pygmalion, 325  
 Destroys this place, or Iarbas leads me away captive?  
 If even I might have conceived a child by you before  
 You went away, a little Aeneas to play in the palace  
 And, in spite of all this, to remind me of you by his looks, oh then  
 I should not feel so utterly finished and desolate. 330

She had spoken. Aeneas, mindful of Jove's words, kept his eyes  
 Unyielding, and with a great effort repressed his feeling for her.  
 In the end he managed to answer:—

Dido, I'll never pretend

You have not been good to me, deserving of everything  
 You can claim. I shall not regret my memories of Elissa 335  
 As long as I breathe, as long as I remember my own self.  
 For my conduct—this, briefly: I did not look to make off from here  
 In secret—do not suppose it; nor did I offer you marriage  
 At any time or consent to be bound by a marriage contract.  
 If fate allowed me to be my own master, and gave me 340  
 Free will to choose my way of life, to solve my problems,  
 Old Troy would be my first choice: I would restore it, and honour  
 My people's relics—the high halls of Priam perpetuated,  
 Troy given back to its conquered sons, a renaissance city,  
 Had been my task. But now Apollo and the Lycian 345

314. *hand you gave me*: the hand-  
 clasp with which he pledged his love  
 and which Dido takes as an earnest of  
 marriage.

335. *Elissa*: another name for Dido.  
 345. *Lycian*: There was an oracle of  
 Apollo at Patara, in Lycia.

Oracle have told me that Italy is our bourne.  
 There lies my heart, my homeland. You, a Phoenician, are held by  
 These Carthaginian towers, by the charm of your Libyan city:  
 So can you grudge us Trojans our vision of settling down  
 In Italy? We too may seek a kingdom abroad. 350  
 Often as night envelops the earth in dewy darkness,  
 Often as star-rise, the troubled ghost of my father, Anchises,  
 Comes to me in my dreams, warns me and frightens me.  
 I am disturbed no less by the wrong I am doing Ascanius,  
 Defrauding him of his destined realm in Hesperia. 355  
 What's more, just now the courier of heaven, sent by Juppiter—  
 I swear it on your life and mine—conveyed to me, swiftly flying,  
 His orders: I saw the god, as clear as day, with my own eyes,  
 Entering the city, and these ears drank in the words he uttered.  
 No more reproaches, then—they only torture us both. 360  
 God's will, not mine, says "Italy".

All the while he was speaking she gazed at him askance,  
 Her glances flickering over him, eyes exploring the whole man  
 In deadly silence. Now, furiously, she burst out:—

Faithless and false! No goddess mothered you, no Dardanus 365  
 Your ancestor! I believe harsh Caucasus begat you  
 On a flint-hearted rock and Hyrcanian tigers suckled you.  
 Why should I hide my feelings? What worse can there be to keep  
 them for?

Not one sigh from him when I wept! Not a softer glance!  
 Did he yield an inch, or a tear, in pity for her who loves him? 370  
 I don't know what to say first. It has come to this,—not Juno,  
 Not Jove himself can view my plight with the eye of justice.  
 Nowhere is it safe to be trustful. I took him, a castaway,  
 A pauper, and shared my kingdom with him—I must have been  
 mad—

Rescued his lost fleet, rescued his friends from death. 375  
 Oh, I'm on fire and drifting! And now Apollo's prophecies,  
 Lycian oracles, couriers of heaven sent by Juppiter  
 With stern commands—all these order you to betray me.  
 Oh, of course this is just the sort of transaction that troubles the  
 calm of

The gods. I'll not keep you, nor probe the dishonesty of your  
 words. 380

352. *Anchises*: Aeneas had rescued him from the burning city of Troy, but the old man died in Sicily, just before Aeneas went to Carthage.

365. *Dardanus*: an ancestor of the Trojans.

366. *Caucasus*: a mountain range near the Caspian Sea. It has connotations of outlandishness and of cruelty.

(It was the place of punishment of Prometheus.)

367. *Hyrcanian*: from the same general area as the Caucasus.

379–380. *calm of the gods*: Dido is referring to the Epicurean idea that the gods are unaffected by human events.

Chase your Italy, then! Go, sail to your realm overseas!  
 I only hope that, if the just spirits have any power,  
 Marooned on some mid-sea rock you may drink the full cup of agony  
 And often cry out for Dido. I'll dog you, from far, with the death-  
 fires;

And when cold death has parted my soul from my body, my  
 spectre

385

Will be wherever you are. You shall pay for the evil you've done  
 me.

The tale of your punishment will come to me down in the shades.

With these words Dido suddenly ended, and sick at heart  
 Turned from him, tore herself away from his eyes, ran indoors,  
 While he hung back in dread of a still worse scene, although  
 He had much to say. Her maids bore up the fainting queen  
 Into her marble chamber and laid her down on the bed.

390

But the god-fearing Aeneas, much as he longed to soothe  
 Her anguish with consolation, with words that would end her  
 troubles,

Heavily sighing, his heart melting from love of her,  
 Nevertheless obeyed the gods and went off to his fleet.

395

Whereupon the Trojans redoubled their efforts, all along  
 The beach dragging down the tall ships, launching the well-tarred  
 bottoms,

Fetching green wood to make oars and baulks of unfashioned  
 timber

From the forest, so eager they were to be gone.

400

You could see them on the move, hurrying out of the city.  
 It looked like an army of ants when, provident for winter,  
 They're looting a great big corn-heap and storing it up in their own  
 house;

Over a field the black file goes, as they carry the loot  
 On a narrow track through the grass; some are strenuously push-  
 ing

405

The enormous grains of corn with their shoulders, while others  
 marshal

The traffic and keep it moving: their whole road seethes with  
 activity.

Ah, Dido, what did you feel when you saw these things going  
 forward?

What moans you gave when, looking forth from your high roof-top,  
 You beheld the whole length of the beach aswarm with men, and  
 the sea's face

410

Alive with the sound and fury of preparations for sailing!  
 Excess of love, to what lengths you drive our human hearts!  
 Once again she was driven to try what tears and entreaties



Could do, and let love beggar her pride—she would leave no appeal  
Untried, lest, for want of it, she should all needlessly die. 415

Anna, you see the bustle down there on the beach; from all sides  
They have assembled; their canvas is stretched to the winds already,  
And the elated mariners have garlanded their ships.

If I was able to anticipate this deep anguish,  
I shall be able to bear it. But do this one thing, Anna, 420  
For your poor sister. You were the only confidante  
Of that faithless man: he told you even his secret thoughts:  
You alone know the most tactful way, the best time to approach  
him.

Go, sister, and make this appeal to my disdainful enemy:—  
Say that I never conspired with the Greeks at Aulis to ruin 425  
The Trojan people, nor sent squadrons of ships against Troy;  
I never desecrated the ashes of dead Anchises,  
So why must Aeneas be deaf and obdurate to my pleading?  
Why off so fast? Will he grant a last wish to her who unhappily  
Loves him, and wait for a favouring wind, an easier voyage? 430  
Not for our marriage that was do I plead now—he has forsworn it,  
Nor that he go without his dear Latium and give up his kingdom.  
I ask a mere nothing—just time to give rein to despair and thus  
calm it,

To learn from ill luck how to grieve for what I have lost, and to  
bear it.

This last favour I beg—oh, pity your sister!—and if he 435  
Grants it, I will repay him; my death shall be his interest.

Such were her prayers, and such the tearful entreaties her  
agonised

Sister conveyed to Aeneas again and again. But unmoved by  
Tearful entreaties he was, adamant against all pleadings:  
Fate blocked them, heaven stopped his ears lest he turn com-  
plaisant. 440

As when some stalwart oak-tree, some veteran of the Alps,  
Is assailed by a wintry wind whose veering gusts tear at it,  
Trying to root it up; wildly whistle the branches,  
The leaves come flocking down from aloft as the bole is battered;  
But the tree stands firm on its crag, for high as its head is car-  
ried 445

Into the sky, so deep do its roots go down towards Hades:  
Even thus was the hero belaboured for long with every kind of  
Pleading, and his great heart thrilled through and through with the  
pain of it;

Resolute, though, was his mind; unavailingly rolled her tears.

But hapless Dido, frightened out of her wits by her destiny, 450  
Prayed for death: she would gaze no more on the dome of daylight.

And now, strengthening her resolve to act and to leave this world,  
 She saw, as she laid gifts on the incense-burning altars—  
 Horrible to relate—the holy water turn black

And the wine she poured changing uncannily to blood. 455  
 She told no one, not even her sister, of this phenomenon.

Again, she had dedicated a chantry of marble within  
 The palace to her first husband; held it in highest reverence;  
 Hung it with snow-white fleeces and with festoons of greenery:  
 Well, from this shrine, when night covered the earth, she  
 seemed 460

To be hearing words—the voice of that husband calling upon her.  
 There was something dirge-like, too, in the tones of the owl on the  
 roof-top

Whose lonely, repeated cries were drawn out to a long keening.  
 Besides, she recalled with horror presages, dread forewarnings  
 Of the prophets of old. Aeneas himself pursued her remorse-  
 lessly 465

In dreams, driving her mad; or else she dreamed of unending  
 Solitude and desertion, of walking alone and eternally  
 Down a long road, through an empty land, in search of her Tyrians.  
 Just so does the raving Pentheus see covens of Furies and has the  
 Delusion of seeing two suns in the sky and a double Thebes: 470

Just so on the stage does Orestes, the son of Agamemnon,  
 Move wildly about while his mother pursues him with torches and  
 black snakes,

And at the door the avenging Furies cut off his retreat.

So when, overmastered by grief, she conceived a criminal mad-  
 ness

And doomed herself to death, she worked out the time and  
 method 475

In secret; then, putting on an expression of calm hopefulness  
 To hide her resolve, she approached her sorrowing sister with these  
 words:—

I have found out a way, Anna—oh, wish me joy of it—  
 To get him back or else get free of my love for him.

Near Ocean's furthest bound and the sunset is Aethiopia, 480  
 The very last place on earth, where giant Atlas pivots  
 The wheeling sky, embossed with fiery stars, on his shoulders.

469. *Pentheus*: king of Thebes. He persecuted the worshipers of the new god Dionysus, and imprisoned the god himself. He was later mocked by the god, who inspired him with the Dionysiac spirit (and perhaps with wine) so that he saw double. In this state he was led off to his death on Cithaeron. These events are dramatized in Euripides' play *The Bacchanals* (*Bacchae*). The refer-

ence to the Eumenides (Furies) in this passage is obscure.

471. *Orestes*: another reference to Greek tragedy. In the *Choephoroe*, the Aeschylean play which follows immediately on the *Agamemnon*, Orestes kills his mother Clytemnestra, and is pursued by the Furies. In other tragic contexts he is represented as pursued by the ghost of his mother.

I have been in touch with a priestess from there, a Massylian, who  
once,

As warden of the Hesperides' sacred close, was used to  
Feed the dragon which guarded their orchard of golden apples, 485  
Sprinkling its food with moist honey and sedative poppy-seeds.  
Now this enchantress claims that her spells can liberate  
One's heart, or can inject love-pangs, just as she wishes;  
Can stop the flow of rivers, send the stars flying backwards,  
Conjure ghosts in the night: she can make the earth cry out 490  
Under one's feet, and elm trees come trooping down from the moun-  
tains.

Dear sister, I solemnly call to witness the gods and you whom  
I love, that I do not willingly resort to her magic arts.  
You must build up a funeral pyre high in the inner courtyard,  
And keep it dark: lay on it the arms which that godless man 495  
Has left on the pegs in our bedroom, all relics of him, and the  
marriage-bed

That was the ruin of me. To blot out all that reminds me  
Of that vile man is my pleasure and what the enchantress directs.

So Dido spoke, and fell silent, her face going deadly white.  
Yet Anna never suspected that Dido was planning her own  
death 500

Through these queer rites, nor imagined how frantic a madness  
possessed her,

Nor feared any worse would happen than when Sychaeus had died.  
So she made the arrangements required of her.

When in the innermost court of the palace the pyre had been  
built up

To a great height with pinewood and logs of ilex, the queen 505  
Festooned the place with garlands and wreathed it with funereal  
Foliage: then she laid on it the clothes, the sword which Aeneas  
Had left, and an effigy of him; she well knew what was to happen.  
Altars are set up all round. Her hair unloosed, the enchantress  
Loudly invokes three hundred deities—Erebus, Chaos, 510  
Hecate, three in one, and three-faced Diana, the virgin.  
She had sprinkled water which came, she pretended, from Lake  
Avernus;

Herbs she had gathered, cut by moonlight with a bronze knife—  
Poisonous herbs all rank with juices of black venom;

483. *Massylian*: from an African tribe.

484. *Hesperides*: the daughters of Hesperus, in the west, who lived in a garden which contained golden apples, guarded by a serpent.

510. *Erebus*: the lowest depth of the underworld. *Chaos*: a Greek personification of the disorder which preceded

the creation of the universe.

511. *Hecate*: title of Diana as goddess of sorcery. *Three-faced Diana*: She is Hecate, the moon, and Diana the virgin huntress.

512. *Avernus*: a lake in southern Italy which was supposed to be the entrance to the lower world.

She has found a love charm, a gland torn from the forehead of a  
new-born 515

Foal before its mother could get it.

Dido, the sacramental grain in her purified hands,  
One foot unsandalled, her dress uncinctured, stood by the altars  
Calling upon the gods and the stars that know fate's secrets,  
Death at her heart, and prayed to whatever power it is 520  
Holds unrequited lovers in its fair, faithful keeping.

Was night. All over the earth, creatures were plucking the flower  
Of soothing sleep, the woods and the wild seas fallen quiet—  
A time when constellations have reached their mid-career,  
When the countryside is all still, the beasts and the brilliant  
birds 525

That haunt the lakes' wide waters or the tangled undergrowth  
Of the champain, stilled in sleep under the quiet night—  
Cares are lulled and hearts can forget for a while their travails.  
Not so the Phoenician queen: death at her heart, she could not  
Ever relax in sleep, let the night in to her eyes 530

Or mind: her agonies mounted, her love reared up again  
And savaged her, till she writhed in a boiling sea of passion.  
So thus she began, her thoughts whirling round in a vicious circle:—

What shall I do? Shall I, who've been jilted, return to my former  
Suitors? go down on my knees for marriage to one of the  
Nomads 535

Although, time and again, I once rejected their offers?  
Well then, am I to follow the Trojan's fleet and bow to  
Their lightest word? I helped them once. Will that help me now?  
Dare I think they remember with gratitude my old kindness?  
But even if I wished it, who would suffer me, welcome me 540  
Aboard those arrogant ships? They hate me. Ah, duped and  
ruined!—

Surely by now I should know the ill faith of Laomedon's people?  
So then? Shall I sail, by myself, with those exulting mariners,  
Or sail against them with all my Tyrian folk about me—  
My people, whom once I could hardly persuade to depart from  
Sidon— 545

Bidding them man their ships and driving them out to sea again?  
Better die—I deserve it—end my pain with the sword.  
Sister, you started it all: overborne by my tears, you laid up  
These evils to drive me mad, put me at the mercy of a foe.  
Oh, that I could have been some child of nature and lived 550  
An innocent life, untouched by marriage and all its troubles!  
I have broken the faith I vowed to the memory of Sichaeus.

542. *Laomedon's people*: Laomedon was a king of Troy who twice broke his

promise, once to Heracles and once to Apollo and Poseidon.

Such were the reproaches she could not refrain from uttering.  
 High on the poop of his ship, resolute now for departure,  
 Aeneas slept; preparations for sailing were fully completed. 555  
 To him in a dream there appeared the shape of the god, returning  
 Just as he'd looked before, as if giving the same admonitions—  
 Mercury's very image, the voice, the complexion, the yellow  
 Hair and the handsome youthful body identical:—

Goddess-born, can you go on sleeping at such a crisis? 560  
 Are you out of your mind, not to see what dangers are brewing up  
 Around you, and not to hear the favouring breath of the West wind?  
 Being set upon death, her heart is aswirl with conflicting passions,  
 Aye, she is brooding now some trick, some desperate deed.  
 Why are you not going, all speed, while the going is good? 565  
 If dawn finds you still here, delaying by these shores,  
 You'll have the whole sea swarming with hostile ships, there will be  
 Firebrands coming against you, you'll see this beach ablaze.  
 Up and away, then! No more lingering! Woman was ever  
 A veering, weathercock creature.

He spoke, and vanished in the darkness. 570  
 Then, startled by the shock of the apparition, Aeneas  
 Snatched himself out of sleep and urgently stirred up his comrades:—

Jump to it, men! To your watch! Go to the rowing benches!  
 Smartly! Hoist the sails! A god from heaven above  
 Spurs me to the cut cables, make off and lose not a moment: 575  
 This was his second warning. O blessed god, we follow you,  
 God indeed, and once more we obey the command joyfully!  
 Be with us! Look kindly upon us! Grant us good sailing weather!  
 Thus did Aeneas cry, and flashing his sword from its scabbard,  
 With the drawn blade he severed the moorings. The same sense  
 of 580

Urgency fired his comrades all; they cut and ran for it.  
 The shore lay empty. The ships covered the open sea.  
 The oarsmen swept the blue and sent the foam flying with hard  
 strokes.

And now was Aurora, leaving the saffron bed of Tithonus,  
 Beginning to shower upon earth the light of another day. 585  
 The queen, looking forth from her roof-top, as soon as she saw the  
 sky

Grow pale and the Trojan fleet running before the wind,  
 Aware that the beach and the roadstead were empty, the sailors  
 gone,  
 Struck herself three times, four times, upon her lovely breast,  
 Tore at her yellow hair, and exclaimed:—

In god's name! shall that foreigner 590  
 Scuttle away and make a laughing-stock of my country?

Will not my people stand to arms for a mass pursuit?  
 Will some not rush the warships out of the docks? Move, then!  
 Bring firebrands apace, issue the weapons, pull on the oars!  
 What am I saying? Where am I? What madness veers my  
 mind?

595

Poor Dido, the wrong you have done—is it only now coming home  
 to you?

You should have thought of that when you gave him your sceptre.  
 So this is

The word of honour of one who, men say, totes round his home-  
 gods

Everywhere, and bore on his back a doddering father!

Why could I not have seized him, torn up his body and littered 600  
 The sea with it? finished his friends with the sword, finished his  
 own

Ascanius and served him up for his father to banquet on?

The outcome of battle had been uncertain?—Let it have been so:  
 Since I was to die, whom had I to fear? I should have stormed  
 Their bulwarks with fire, set alight their gangways, gutted the whole  
 lot—

605

Folk, father and child—then flung myself on the conflagration.

O sun, with your beams surveying all that is done on earth!

Juno, the mediator and witness of my tragedy!

Hecate, whose name is howled by night at the city crossroads!

Avenging Furies, and you, the patrons of dying Elissa!— 610

Hear me! Incline your godheads to note this wickedness

So worthy of your wrath! And hear my prayer! If he,

That damned soul, must make port and get to land, if thus

Jove destines it, if that bourne is fixed for him irrevocably,

May he be harried in war by adventurous tribes, and exiled 615

From his own land; may Ascanius be torn from his arms; may he  
 have to

Sue for aid, and see his own friends squalidly dying.

Yes, and when he's accepted the terms of a harsh peace,

Let him never enjoy his realm or the allotted span,

598. *home-gods*: Aeneas carries with him on his journeys the images of the gods of Troy, rescued from the flames on the night of Troy's fall.

599. *on his back*: Dido recalls Aeneas' story of the sack of Troy which he told her at the banquet (Book II); he left the city leading his son by the hand and carrying his old father on his shoulders.

615 ff. *May he be harried . . .*: This prophecy of Dido's, expressed in the form of a wish, is destined to come

true. Aeneas meets resistance in Italy; at one point in the war he has to leave Ascanius behind and go to beg aid from an Italian king, Evander. The final peace is made on condition that the name of his people be changed from "Trojans" to "Latins"; and he is eventually drowned in an Italian river. Aeneas' reward for all his struggles is to come not during his life, but in the glory of the generations which succeed him.

But fall before his time and lie on the sands, unburied. 620  
 That is my last prayer. I pour it out, with my lifeblood.  
 Let you, my Tyrians, sharpen your hatred upon his children  
 And all their seed for ever: send this as a present to  
 My ghost. Between my people and his, no love, no alliance!  
 Rise up from my dead bones, avenger! Rise up, one 625  
 To hound the Trojan settlers with fire and steel remorselessly,  
 Now, some day, whenever the strength for it shall be granted!  
 Shore to shore, sea to sea, weapon to weapon opposed—  
 I call down a feud between them and us to the last generation!

These things she said; then tried to think of every expedient, 630  
 Seeking the quickest way out of the life she hated.

Briefly now she addressed Barce, the nurse of Sychaeus,  
 Her own being dust and ashes, interred in her native land:—

Dear nurse, please will you get my sister, Anna. She must  
 Hasten to purify herself with living water, and fetch 635  
 The cattle, tell her—the atonement offerings, as directed;  
 Then let her come. And do you go and put on the holy headband.  
 These rites to Jove of the Underworld, duly made ready and  
 started,

I mean to go through with now, and put an end to my troubles,  
 Committing to the flames the funeral pyre of that Trojan. 640

She spoke. The nurse hurried off with scilicet officiousness.  
 But Dido, trembling, distraught by the terrible thing she was doing,  
 Her bloodshot eyes all restless, with hectic blotches upon  
 Her quivering cheeks, yet pale with the shade of advancing death,  
 Ran to the innermost court of the palace, climbed the lofty 645  
 Pyre, frantic at heart, and drew Aeneas' sword—

Her present to him, procured once for a far different purpose.  
 Then, after eyeing the clothes he had left behind, and the memoried  
 Bed, pausing to weep and brood on him for a little,  
 She lay down on the bed and spoke her very last words:— 650

O relics of him, things dear to me while fate, while heaven al-  
 lowed it,

Receive this life of mine, release me from my troubles!  
 I have lived, I have run to the finish the course which fortune gave  
 me:

And now, a queenly shade, I shall pass to the world below.  
 I built a famous city, saw my own place established, 655  
 Avenged a husband, exacted a price for a brother's enmity.  
 Happy I would have been, ah, beyond words happy,  
 If only the Trojan ships had never come to my shore!

625. *avenger*: Dido foresees the har-  
 rying of Italy by the Carthaginian gen-  
 eral Hannibal, who in the third century

B.C. invaded Italy, defeating the Romans  
 in battle after battle, but failed to cap-  
 ture Rome.

These words; then, burying her face in the bed:—

Shall I die unavenged?

At least, let me die. Thus, thus! I go to the dark, go gladly. 660

May he look long, from out there on the deep, at my flaming pyre,  
The heartless! And may my death-fires signal bad luck for his  
voyage!

She had spoken; and with these words, her attendants saw her  
falling

Upon the sword, they could see the blood spouting up over  
The blade, and her hands spattered. Their screams rang to the  
roofs of 665

The palace; then rumour ran amok through the shocked city.

All was weeping and wailing, the streets were filled with a keening  
Of women, the air resounded with terrible lamentations.

It was as if Carthage or ancient Tyre should be falling,

With enemy troops breaking into the town and a conflagration 670  
Furiously sweeping over the abodes of men and of gods.

Anna heard it: half dead from extreme fear, she ran through

The crowd, tearing her cheeks with her nails, beating her breast

With her fists, and called aloud by name on the dying woman:—

So this was your purpose, Dido? You were making a dupe of  
me? 675

That pyre, those lighted altars—for me, they were leading to this?  
How shall I chide you for leaving me? Were you too proud to let  
your

Sister die with you? You should have called me to share your end:

One hour, one pang of the sword could have carried us both away.

Did I build this pyre with my own hands, invoking our family  
gods, 680

So that you might lie on it, and I, the cause of your troubles, not  
be there?

You have destroyed more than your self—me, and the lords

And commons and city of Sidon. Quick! Water for her wounds!

Let me bathe them, and if any last breath is fluttering from her  
mouth,

Catch it in mine!

So saying, she had scaled the towering pyre, 685

Taken the dying woman into her lap, was caressing her,

Sobbing, trying to staunch the dark blood with her own dress.

Dido made an effort to raise her heavy eyes,

Then gave it up: the sword-blade grated against her breast bone.

Three times she struggled to rise, to lift herself on an elbow, 690

Three times rolled back on the bed. Her wandering gaze went up

660. *Thus, thus*: The repetition represents the two strokes of the sword.

669–671. *as if Carthage . . . gods*: In these lines is prefigured the capture

and total destruction of Carthage by the army of Scipio Africanus the Younger in 146 B.C.



To the sky, looking for light: she gave a moan when she saw it.

Then did almighty Juno take pity on her long-drawn-out  
Sufferings and hard going, sent Iris down from Olympus  
To part the agonised soul from the body that still clung to it. 695  
Since she was dying neither a natural death nor from others'  
Violence, but desperate and untimely, driven to it  
By a crazed impulse, not yet had Proserpine clipped from her  
head

The golden tress, or consigned her soul to the Underworld.  
So now, all dewy, her pinions the colour of yellow crocus, 700  
Her wake a thousand rainbow hues refracting the sunlight,  
Iris flew down, and over Dido hovering, said:—

As I was bidden, I take this sacred thing, the Death-god's  
Due: and you I release from your body.

She snipped the tress.

Then all warmth went at once, the life was lost in air. 705

[After his hurried departure from Carthage, Aeneas goes to Sicily, to the kingdom of his friend Accstes. There he organizes funeral games in honor of his father, Anchises (who had died in Sicily on their first visit there), and leaves behind those of his following who are unwilling to go on to the uncertainty of a settlement in Italy. Arrived in Italy, he consults the Sibyl, who guides him down to the world of the dead. There he is to see his father and the vision of the future of his race, which is to be his only reward.]

### Book VI

. . . You gods who rule the kingdom of souls! You soundless  
shades!

Chaos, and Phlegethon! O mute wide leagues of Nightland!— 265  
Grant me to tell what I have heard! With your assent  
May I reveal what lies deep in the gloom of the Underworld!

Dimly through the shadows and dark solitudes they wended,  
Through the void domiciles of Dis, the bodiless regions:  
Just as, through fitful moonbeams, under the moon's thin light, 270  
A path lies in a forest, when Jove has palled the sky  
With gloom, and the night's blackness has bled the world of colour.  
See! At the very porch and entrance way to Orcus  
Grief and ever-haunting Anxiety make their bed:  
Here dwell pallid Diseases, here morose Old Age, 275  
With Fear, ill-prompting Hunger, and squalid Indigence,  
Shapes horrible to look at, Death and Agony;  
Sleep, too, which is the cousin of Death; and Guilty Joys,

694. *Iris*: a messenger of the gods, particularly of Juno; also identified with the rainbow.

265. *Phlegethon*: an underworld river of fire.

269. *Dis*: Pluto, the ruler of the underworld.

And there, against the threshold, War, the bringer of Death:  
 Here are the iron cells of the Furies, and lunatic Strife 280  
 Whose viperine hair is caught up with a headband soaked in  
 blood. . . .

From here is the road that leads to the dismal waters of  
 Acheron. 295

Here a whirlpool boils with mud and immense swirlings  
 Of water, spouting up all the slimy sand of Cocytus.  
 A dreadful ferryman looks after the river crossing,  
 Charon; appallingly filthy he is, with a bush of unkempt  
 White beard upon his chin, with eyes like jets of fire; 300  
 And a dirty cloak draggles down, knotted about his shoulders.  
 He poles the boat, he looks after the sails, he is all the crew  
 Of that rust-coloured wherry which takes the dread across—  
 An ancient now, but a god's old age is green and sappy.  
 This way came fast and streaming up to the bank the whole  
 throng: 305

Matrons and men were there, and there were great-heart heroes  
 Finished with earthly life, boys and unmarried maidens,  
 Young men laid on the pyre before their parents' eyes;  
 Multitudinous as the leaves that fall in a forest  
 At the first frost of autumn, or the birds that out of the deep-  
 sca 310

Fly to land in migrant flocks, when the cold of the year  
 Has sent them overscas in search of a warmer climate.  
 So they all stood, each begging to be ferried across first,  
 Their hands stretched out in longing for the shore beyond the river.  
 But the surly ferryman embarks now this, now that group, 315  
 While others he keeps away at a distance from the shingle.  
 Aeneas, being astonished and moved by the great stir, said:—

Tell me, O Sibyl, what means this rendezvous at the river?  
 What purpose have these souls? By what distinction are some  
 Turned back, while other souls sweep over the wan water? 320

To which the long-lived Sibyl uttered this brief reply:—

O son of Anchises' loins and true-born offspring of heaven,  
 What you see is the mere of Cocytus, the Stygian marsh  
 By whose mystery even the gods, having sworn, are afraid to be for-  
 sworn.

All this crowd you see are the helpless ones, the unburied: 325  
 That ferryman is Charon: the ones he conveys have had burial.  
 None may be taken across from bank to awesome bank of  
 That harsh-voiced river until his bones are laid to rest.

295. *Acheron*: a river of the under-  
 world.

297. *Cocytus*: the river of lamenta-

tion.

323. *Stygian*: The Styx is another  
 infernal river.

Otherwise, he must haunt this place for a hundred years  
Before he's allowed to revisit the longed-for stream at last. 330

The son of Anchises paused and stood stock still, in deep  
Meditation, pierced to the heart by pity for their hard fortune.  
He saw there, sorrowing because deprived of death's fulfilment,  
Leucaspis and Orontes, the commodore of the Lycian  
Squadron, who had gone down, their ship being lost with all  
hands 335

In a squall, sailing with him the stormy seas from Troy. . . .

At once were voices heard, a sound of mewling and wailing,  
Ghosts of infants sobbing there at the threshold, infants  
From whom a dark day stole their share of delicious life,  
Snatched them away from the breast, gave them sour death to  
drink.

Next to them were those condemned to death on a false charge. 430  
Yet every place is duly allotted and judgment is given.

Minos, as president, summons a jury of the dead: he hears  
Every charge, examines the record of each; he shakes the urn.  
Next again are located the sorrowful ones who killed

Themselves, throwing their lives away, not driven by guilt 435  
But because they loathed living: how they would like to be  
In the world above now, enduring poverty and hard trials!  
God's law forbids: that unlovely fen with its glooming water  
Corrals them there, the nine rings of Styx corral them in.

Not far from here can be seen, extending in all directions, 440  
The vale of mourning—such is the name it bears: a region  
Where those consumed by the wasting torments of merciless love  
Haunt the sequestered alleys and myrtle groves that give them  
Cover; death itself cannot cure them of love's disease.

Here Aeneas descried Phaedra and Procris, sad 445  
Eriphyle displaying the wounds her heartless son once dealt her,  
Evadne and Pasiphae; with them goes Laodamia;

Here too is Caeneus, once a young man, but next a woman

432. *Minos*: judge of the dead.

445 ff. *Here Aeneas descried* . . . :  
A catalogue of unhappy lovers follows.

445. *Phaedra*: wife of Theseus, king  
of Athens, who fell in love with Hip-  
polytus, her husband's son by another  
woman; the result was her death by  
suicide and Hippolytus' death through  
his father's curse. *Procris*: killed by her  
husband in an accident which was  
brought about by her own jealousy.

446. *Eriphyle*: betrayed her husband  
for gold and was killed by her own son.

447. *Evadne*: threw herself on the  
pyre of her husband, who was killed by  
Zeus for impiety. *Pasiphae*: wife of  
Minos of Crete, she conceived a mon-

strous love for a bull. *Laodamia*:  
begged to be allowed to talk with her  
dead husband; the request was granted  
by the gods and when his time came to  
return, she went back with him to the  
land of the dead.

448. *Caeneus*: Virgil's words in the  
original are ambiguous (perhaps to re-  
flect the ambiguity of the sex of  
Caeneus). The usual explanation of  
the passage is that Caenis (a woman)  
was changed by Poseidon into a man  
(Caeneus), but returned to her original  
sex after death. Since the name occurs  
here in a catalogue of women, this  
seems the most likely explanation.

And now changed back by fate to his original sex.  
 Amongst them, with her death-wound still bleeding, through the  
 deep wood

450

Was straying Phoenician Dido. Now when the Trojan leader  
 Found himself near her and knew that the form he glimpsed  
 through the shadows

Was hers—as early in the month one sees, or imagines he sees,  
 Through a wrack of cloud the new moon rising and glimmering—  
 He shed some tears, and addressed her in tender, loving  
 tones:—

455

Poor, unhappy Dido, so the message was true that came to me  
 Saying you'd put an end to your life with the sword and were dead?  
 Oh god! was it death I brought you, then? I swear by the stars,  
 By the powers above, by whatever is sacred in the Underworld,  
 It was not of my own will, Dido, I left your land.

460

Heaven's commands, which now force me to traverse the shades,  
 This sour and desolate region, this pit of darkness, drove me  
 Imperiously from your side. I did not, could not imagine  
 My going would ever bring such terrible agony on you.  
 Don't move away! Oh, let me see you a little longer!

465

To fly from me, when this is the last word fate allows us!

Thus did Aeneas speak, trying to soften the wild-eyed,  
 Passionate-hearted ghost, and brought the tears to his own eyes.  
 She would not turn to him; she kept her gaze on the ground,  
 And her countenance remained as stubborn to his appeal  
 As if it were carved from recalcitrant flint or a rag of marble.  
 At last she flung away, hating him still, and vanished  
 Into the shadowy wood where her first husband, Sychaeus,  
 Understands her unhappiness and gives her an equal love.

470

None the less did Aeneas, hard hit by her piteous fate,  
 Weep after her from afar, as she went, with tears of compassion. . . .

475

[Aeneas returns to the upper air and begins his settlement in Italy.  
 He is offered the hand of the princess Lavinia by her father Latinus,  
 but this provokes a war against the Trojans, led by Turnus of  
 Laurentum, in the course of which Aeneas is wounded and stops by  
 a stream to rest. At this point his mother, Venus, comes to him with  
 the armor made for him by Vulcan (Hephaestus), her husband; on  
 the shield is carved a representation of the future glories of Rome.]

### Book VIII

. . . Venus, divinely shining among the dark clouds, descended  
 Bringing her presents: when she had seen from afar Aeneas  
 On the other side of a cool stream in a secluded dell,  
 She offered herself to his view quite unexpectedly, saying:—

610

Look! Here are the presents my consort promised. All his science  
Has gone to their making. Now you need not shrink from challenging  
Haughty Laurentines and hot-headed Turnus to battle, my son.

With these words, the Cytherean went into her son's embrace:

615

The radiant arms she had propped up against an oak, before him.  
Aeneas, overjoyed by her gifts and the glory of them,  
Eyed each piece, couldn't have enough of gazing: in wonder  
He took them up with his hands, in his arms, examining each—  
The formidable helmet with plumes like fountains of fire, 620  
The sword that would deal out doom, the breastplate of hard  
bronze,

Massive and ruddy-coloured, like to some louring cloud  
When it catches fire from the rays of the sun and glows afar;  
Then the burnished greaves of gold-alloy inlaid with high-carat  
Gold, and the spear, and the shield's miraculous workmanship. 625  
Upon this shield the Fire-god, with knowledge of things to come,  
Being versed in the prophets, had wrought events from Italian  
history

And Roman triumphs; upon it appeared the whole line that would  
spring from

Ascanius' stock, and the wars they would fight in, one by one.  
He had depicted the mother wolf as she lay full length in 630

The green-swarded cave of Mars, with the twin boy babies fondling  
And suckling at her udders, fearlessly nuzzling their dam;  
She, her graceful neck bent sideways and back, is caressing  
Each child in turn with her tongue, licking them into shape.

Nearby he had pictured the Sabine women so unceremoniously 635  
Snatched from among the crowds around the arena at Rome

During the Great Games; then the war that immediately came,  
Between Romulus' people and the hard-living Sabines of old Tatius.

Next, these same two kings, their quarrel laid aside,  
Are standing at Jove's altar, armed, with bowls in their hands, 640

Ratifying a treaty by the sacrifice of a sow.

Near this was the scene where chariots, driven apart, had torn  
Mettus to pieces (but you should have kept to your word, Al-  
ban!)—

614. *Laurentines* . . . *Turnus*: Turnus of Laurentum is the leader of the Italian resistance to Aeneas.

615. *the Cytherean*: Venus; Cythera is one of her cult centers.

626. *Fire-god*: Vulcan.

630. *mother wolf*: The twins who were to build Rome, Romulus and Remus, sons of Mars, were cast out into the woods and there suckled by a she-wolf.

635. *Sabine women*: The newly

founded city consisted almost entirely of men; the Romans decided to steal the wives of their neighbors, the Sabines. They invited them to an athletic festival, and at a given signal, every Roman carried off a Sabine bride. The war which followed ended in the amalgamation of the Roman and Sabine peoples.

638. *Tatius*: the Sabine king.

643. *Mettus*: of Alba. He broke an agreement made during the early wars of Rome and was punished by being

Tullus is dragging away the remains of that false-tongued man  
Through a wood, and the brambles there are drenched with a  
bloody dew. 645

Again, you could see Porsenna telling the Romans to take back  
The banished Tarquin, and laying strenuous siege to Rome,  
While the sons of Aeneas took up the sword for freedom's sake:  
He was pictured there to the life, pouring out threats and wild with  
Chagrin, seeing that Cocles dared to break down the bridge 650  
And Cloelia had slipped her fetters and was swimming across the  
river.

At the top of the shield, Manlius, warden of the Tarpeian  
Fortress, stood before the temple, guarding the Capitol—  
The palace, just built by Romulus, being shown with a rough  
thatched roof.

Here too a silvery goose went fluttering through a golden 655  
Colonnade, honking out an alarum, that the Gauls are on us:  
Under the cover of a dark night, lucky for them, the Gauls  
Creep closer through the brushwood, some have already scaled  
The citadel's heights: their clothing and hair were done in gold;  
The stripes on their cloaks are gleaming; about their fair-skinned  
throats 660

Are necklaces fastened; each of them brandishes two Alpine  
Spears in his hand, and carries a tall, narrow shield for protection.  
Vulcan had also embossed the dancing Salii and naked  
Luperci, their head-dresses bound with wool, and the shields that  
fell from

Heaven: a solemn procession of virtuous ladies was moving 665  
In cushioned carriages through the city. Elsewhere the deep gates  
Of hell were represented, the domicile of the damned  
And the torments they suffer—Catiline hangs from the edge of a  
terrible

torn apart by two chariots moving in  
opposite directions.

644. *Tullus*: the Roman king who  
punished Mettius.

646. *Porsenna*: the Etruscan king  
who attempted to restore the last of the  
Roman kings, Tarquin, to the throne  
from which he had been expelled.

650. *Cocles*: Horatius Cocles, who  
with two companions defended the  
bridge across the Tiber to give the  
Romans time to destroy it.

651. *Cloelia*: a Roman hostage held  
by Porsenna, who escaped by swim-  
ming the Tiber.

652. *Manlius*: consul in 392 B.C.; he  
was in charge of the citadel ("Tarpeian  
fortress") at a time when the Gauls  
from the north held all the rest of the  
city. They made a night attack on the  
citadel, but Manlius, awakened by the

cackling of the sacred geese, beat it off,  
and saved Rome.

654. *Romulus*: In Virgil's time there  
was still preserved at Rome a rustic  
building which was supposed to have  
been the dwelling place of Romulus.

663. *Salii*: the twelve priests of Mars,  
the war-god, who danced in his honor  
carrying shields which had fallen from  
heaven.

664. *Luperci*: priests of Lupercus, a  
Roman god corresponding to the Greek  
Pan.

668. *Catiline*: leader of a conspiracy  
to overthrow the republic which was  
halted mainly through the efforts of  
Cicero, consul in 63 B.C. Catiline is  
the type of discord, representing the  
civil war which almost destroyed the  
Roman state, and to which Augustus  
later put an end.

Precipice, shrinking away from the faces of Furies above him:  
But the righteous are set apart, with Cato as their law-giver. 670  
Among these subjects extended a wide and swelling sea;  
It was done in gold, yet it looked like the blue sea foaming with  
white-caps:

Dolphins, picked out in silver, were cart-wheeling all around,  
Lashing the face of the deep with their tails and cleaving the water.  
Centrally were displayed two fleets of bronze, engaged in 675  
The battle of Actium; all about Cape Leucas you saw  
Brisk movement of naval formations; the sea was a blaze of gold.  
On one side Augustus Cæsar, high up on the poop, is leading  
The Italians into battle, the Senate and People with him,  
His home-gods and the great gods: two flames shoot up from his  
helmet 680

In jubilant light, and his father's star dawns over its crest.  
Elsewhere in the scene is Agrippa—the gods and the winds fight  
for him—

Prominent, leading his column: the naval crown with its miniature  
Ships' beaks, a proud decoration of war, shines on his head.  
On the other side, with barbaric wealth and motley equipment, 685  
Is Anthony, fresh from his triumphs in the East, by the shores of  
the Indian

Ocean; Egypt, the powers of the Orient and uttermost Bactra  
Sail with him; also—a shameful thing—his Egyptian wife.  
The fleets are converging at full speed, the sea is all churned and  
foaming

As the oarsmen take their long strokes and the trident bows drive  
on. 690

They manoeuvre for sea-room: you'd think the Cyclades isles were  
unmoored

And afloat, or mountains were charging at mountains, to see those  
massive

Galley on one side attacking the turreted ships of the other.

Volleys of flaming material and iron missiles fly thick

And fast; a strange new slaughter reddens the plains of Nep-  
tune. 695

670. *Cato*: the noblest of the republicans who had fought Julius Caesar; he stood for honesty and the seriousness which the Romans most admired. He committed suicide in 47 B.C. after Caesar's victory in Africa. Before taking his life he read through Plato's *Phædo*, a dialogue concerned with the immortality of the soul, which ends with an account of the death of Socrates.

676. *Actium*: on the west coast of Greece. The naval battle fought here in 31 B.C. was the decisive engagement

of the civil war. Augustus, the master of the western half of the empire, defeated Anthony, who held the eastern half and was supported by Cleopatra, queen of Egypt. *Cape Leucas*: a promontory near Actium; there was a temple of Apollo on it (see l. 704).

682. *Agrippa*: Augustus' admiral at Actium.

687. *Bactra*: on the borders of India.

691. *Cyclades*: the islands of the southern Aegean Sea.

In the midst, Cleopatra rallies her fleet with Egyptian timbrel,  
 For she cannot yet see the two serpents of death behind her.  
 Barking Anubis, a whole progeny of grotesque  
 Deities are embattled against Neptune and Minerva  
 And Venus. Mars is raging in the thick of the fight, his figure 700  
 Wrought from iron, and ominous Furies look on from above;  
 Here Discord strides exulting in her torn mantle, and she is  
 Followed by Bellona wielding a bloodstained scourge.  
 Viewing this, Apollo of Actium draws his bow  
 From aloft: it creates a panic; all the Egyptians, all 705  
 The Indians, Arabians and Sabaeans now turn tail.  
 You could see the queen Cleopatra praying a fair wind, making  
 All sail, in the very act of paying the sheets out and running.  
 The Fire-god had rendered her, pale with the shadow of her own  
 death,  
 Amid the carnage, borne on by the waves and the westerly gale; 710  
 And, over against her, the Nile, sorrowing in all its length,  
 Throws wide the folds of its watery garment, inviting the con-  
 quered  
 To sail for refuge into that blue, protective bosom.  
 But Caesar has entered the walls of Rome in triumphal procession,  
 Three times a victor; he dedicates now a thanks-offering im-  
 mortal 715  
 To Italy's gods—three hundred great shrines all over the city.  
 The streets resound with cheering, rejoicing and merrymaking:  
 In all the temples women are chanting, altars are lit up;  
 At the foot of the altars lie the bodies of sacrificed bullocks.  
 Caesar, enthroned in the marble-white temple of dazzling  
 Apollo, 720  
 Inspects the gifts from the nations and hangs them up on the  
 splendid  
 Portals: subjected tribes pass by in a long procession—  
 A diversity of tongues, of national dress and equipment.  
 Here Vulcan had represented the Nomads, the flowing robes of  
 Africans, here the Leleges, Carians, Gelonian bowmen; 725  
 Some carry a picture of Euphrates, its waters pacified;  
 There go the Morini, furthest of men, the branching Rhine,  
 The Scythians untamed, the Araxes fretting about its bridge.  
 Such were the scenes that Acneas admired on the shield of  
 Vulcan

698. *Anubis*: an Egyptian god, represented with the face of a dog.

703. *Bellona*: a Roman goddess of war.

725. *Leleges*, *Carians*: peoples of Asia Minor. *Gelonian*: from Scythia (in

the Balkans).

726. *Euphrates*: an Eastern river.

727. *Morini*: a Belgian people.

728. *Araxes*: a turbulent river in Armenia. Augustus built a new bridge over it.



His mother gave him. Elated by its portrayal of things 730  
Beyond his ken, he shouldered his people's glorious future.

[In the course of the desperate battles which follow, the young Pallas, entrusted to Aeneas' care by his father, is killed by the Italian champion Turnus, who takes and wears the belt of Pallas as the spoil of victory. The fortunes of the war later change in favor of the Trojans, and Aeneas kills the Etruscan King Mezentius, Turnus' ally. Eventually, as the Italians prepare to accept the generous peace terms offered by Aeneas, Turnus forestalls them by accepting Aeneas' challenge to single combat to decide the issue. But this solution is frustrated by the intervention of Juno, who foreshadows Aeneas' victory. She prompts Turnus' sister, the river nymph Juturna, to intervene in an attempt to save Turnus' life. Juturna stirs up the Italians who are watching the champions prepare for the duel; the truce is broken, and in the subsequent fighting Aeneas is wounded by an arrow. Healed by Venus, he returns to the fight, and the Italians are driven back. Turnus finally faces his adversary. His sword breaks on the armor forged by Vulcan, and he runs from Aeneas; he is saved by Juturna, who, assuming the shape of his charioteer, hands him a fresh sword. At this point Jupiter intervenes to stop the vain attempts of Juno and Juturna to save Turnus.]

*Book XII*

. . . Meantime the king of all-powerful Olympus addresses Juno  
As she looks down at the combat out of a golden cloud:—

My wife, how shall it end now? What more is there you can  
do?

For you know, and admit the knowledge, that Aeneas is called of  
heaven

As a national hero, and fate is exalting him to the stars. 795

What are you planning? Why do you linger here in the chill  
clouds?

Was it right that Aeneas, the heaven-born, should be hurt by the  
hand of a mortal?

Or that Juturna should give back the missing sword to her brother—

Ah yes, without you she was powerless—and strengthen the loser's  
hand?

Then yield to my persuasions, give up the long feud now at last! 800

No more of the hidden rancour that so consumes you, the sullen

Recriminations your sweet lips have troubled me with so often!

This is the end, I say. You had power to harry the Trojans

All over lands and seas, to kindle accursed war,

Bring tragic disgrace on a king's home and drape a betrothal in mourning.

805

I forbid you to carry the feud any further.

So Jupiter spoke.

Juno, the daughter of Saturn, with lowered eyes, replied:—

It is because your wishes, great consort, were known to me,  
That I have reluctantly given up Turnus and quit the earth.

Otherwise I'd not be sitting apart here and putting up with  
Every humiliation: no, armed with flame, I'd be there  
In action, dragging the Trojans into a fatal fight.

810

I admit I encouraged Juturna to go and help her unfortunate  
Brother, approved of her acting more boldly still to preserve him;

But not that she should use her bow and shoot at the Trojans:

815

This I swear by the source of the inexorable river,

Styx—the one dreadful and binding oath for us heaven-dwellers.

And now I do truly yield; I give up the fight—I am sick of it.

One thing, and no ruling of fate forbids you to grant it, I do

Entreat, for Latium's sake and the dignity of your own kin:

820

When they make peace through a prosperous—aye, let it be so—  
a prosperous

Marriage, and when they are making agreements and laws to unite  
them,

Do not command the indigenous Latins to change their ancient

Name, to become Trojans and to be called the Teucrians:

Allow them to keep the old language and their traditional dress:

825

Let it be Latium for ever, and the kings be Alban kings;

Let the line be Roman, the qualities making it great be Italian.

Troy's gone; may it be gone in name as well as reality.

The creator of man and of all things replied to her with a smile:—

Jove's sister you are indeed and the second child of Saturn,

830

So powerful the tides of wrath sweeping within your breast!

But come, there was no need for this violent emotion; calm yourself.

Willingly I grant what you ask: you have won me over.

The Italians shall keep their native tongue and their old traditions;

Their name shall not be altered. The Trojans will but sink down

in

835

The mass and be made one with them. I'll add the rites and usage

Of Trojan worship to theirs. All will be Latins, speaking

One tongue. From this blend of Italian and Trojan blood shall arise

805. *betrothal in mourning*: a reference not only to the Italian losses but also to the suicide of Amata, wife of King Latinus, who hanged herself when the Trojans assaulted the city just before the duel between Aeneas and Turnus began.

822. *Marriage*: the marriage between

Aeneas and Lavinia, daughter of Latinus.

824. *Teucrians*: Trojans, from the name of Teucer, the first Trojan king.

826. *Alban*: the city of Alba Longa was founded by Ascanius.

830. *Jove's sister*: Jove (Jupiter) and Juno were brother and sister as well as husband and wife.

A people surpassing all men, nay even the gods, in godliness.  
No other nation on earth will pay such reverence to Juno. 840

The goddess bowed and agreed, glad now to change her whole policy,  
Passed forthwith from the sky, leaving her place in the clouds.

This being accomplished, the Father brooded awhile on another Question—how to detach from her brother's side Juturna.

Two demon fiends there are, called by the name of Furies, 845  
Whom darkest Night brought forth at one and the same birth with Hellish Megaera, breeding all three alike with the twining Coils of serpents and giving them wings like the wind. These creatures

Attend on Juppiter's throne, at the house of heaven's stern Ruler,  
Ready to stab fear into the hearts of anguished mortals 850

Whenever the king of the gods is dealing out pestilences  
And hideous death, or affrighting guilty cities with war.

Juppiter now sent one of these demons hurrying down from Heaven, to confront Juturna with a forbidding omen.

Off she flew, and swiftly was borne to earth in a whirlwind. 855

Just as an arrow flies through the clouds from a bowstring—a shaft  
Whose tip some Parthian or Cretan archer has doped with a deadly  
Poison, and then shot it; fatal the wound it will give—

Whirring and unsuspected it flies through the mirk of the clouds:  
So sped the spawn of Night upon her way to the earth. 860

When she could see the Trojan lines and Turnus' army,

She suddenly dwindled and changed into the shape of that small owl  
Which often at night, when no one's about, perches on tombs  
Or gables, and hoots for hours disquietingly through the darkness.

Thus transformed, the Fury flittered about the face of 865

Turnus, screeching, and kept on bumping his shield with her wings.

The thing was so uncanny that he went numb with fear

And his hair stood on end, and the voice died in his throat.

But Juturna recognised from afar the creaking wings of

The demon. It broke her spirit: she rent her dishevelled hair, 870

Scratched at her cheeks and beat her breast in grief for her brother:—

Oh, Turnus, what can your sister do for you now? What worse  
Remains for this much-tried heart? I have used all my powers

To save you. But how can I face a manifestation so dreadful?

No, no, I give up the fight now. I tremble—oh, spare me your  
terrors, 875

You sinister bird: I know the beat of your wings, I know that

857. *Parthian*: Parthia was the most dangerous neighbor of the Roman Empire in the east. Parthian mounted archers were famous.

They sound the tocsin of death, and Jove's high purpose has given  
These high-handed orders. So thus he requites me who took my  
virginity?

Why did he make me immortal? disfranchise me from the common  
Law of death? But for that, I could end my terrible anguish 880  
This very moment, and go through the shades with my poor brother.  
I immortal! What joy can I have from immortal life,  
Bereft of my brother? Alas, that nowhere may earth yawn deep  
And let me go down to the ghosts below, for I am a deity!

So saying, the goddess veiled her face in her grey-green mantle,  
And heavily sighing, vanished into the depths of the river. 886

Aeneas moved up on his enemy, hefting and flashing his spear  
Which was huge as a tree, and shouted out with extreme ferocity:—

Turnus, you'll get no more reprieves. Are you still recoiling?  
It's cold steel now, hand to hand, not fleetness of foot, that will  
tell. 890

Try all the transformations of Proteus! Summon up  
Your powers, whether of courage or magic! Take wings, if you like,  
And shoot straight up to the stars, or go to ground in the deep earth!  
Turnus, shaking his head, replied:—

It's the gods and Juppiter's  
Enmity frighten me, not your sneers or your bloodthirsty speeches.

Without a word more he looked round and his eyes alit on a huge  
stone— 896

A huge old stone which for years had been lying there on the plain  
As a boundary mark between fields, to prevent disputes about owner-  
ship.

Hardly could twelve strong men, of such physique as the earth  
Produces nowadays, pick up and carry it on their shoulders. 900

Well, Turnus pounced on it, lifted it, and taking a run to give it  
More impetus, hurled this stone from his full height at Aeneas.

But as he moved, as he ran, as he raised his hands, as he threw  
That boulder, for him it was just as if somebody else were doing  
it.

Ice-bound were his veins, and his legs felt like water. 905

So too the stone he hurled, flying through empty air,

Failed to make the distance, fell short of its objective.

But, as it is in a nightmare, when sleep's narcotic hand

Is leaden upon our eyes, we seem to be desperately trying

To run and run, but we cannot—for all our efforts, we sink  
down 910

Nerveless; our usual strength is just not there, and our tongue  
Won't work at all—we can't utter a word or produce one sound:

879. *he*: Juppiter.

891. *Proteus*: the old man of the  
sea, who lived on the Egyptian island

of Pharos. For an account of his  
power to change his shape, see Homer's  
*Odyssey*, Book IV.

So with Turnus, each move he bravely attempted to make,  
The unearthly demon brought it to nothing. Now did his feelings  
Veer this way and that in distraction: he gazed at the city, the  
Rutuli;

915

Faltered with fear; trembled at the weapon menacing him.  
He could see no way to escape and no way to get at Aeneas;  
His chariot, his sister who drove it, were nowhere to be seen.  
So Turnus faltered: the other brandished his fateful spear,  
And watching out for an opening, hurled it with all his might  
From a distance. The noise it made was louder than that of any  
Great stone projected by siege artillery, louder than  
A meteorite's explosion. The spear flew on its sinister  
Mission of death like a black tornado, and piercing the edge of  
The seven-fold shield, laid open the corselet of Turnus, low  
down.

925

Right through his thigh it ripped, with a hideous sound. The impact  
Brought giant Turnus down on bent knee to the earth.  
The Italians sprang to their feet, crying out: the hills all round  
Bayed back their howl of dismay, far and wide the deep woods  
echoed it.

Turnus, brought low, stretched out a pleading hand, looked up  
at  
His foe in appeal:—

930

I know, I've deserved it. I'll not beg life.  
Yours was the luck. Make the most of it. But if the thought of a  
father's  
Unhappiness can move you—a father such as you had  
In Anchises—I ask you, show compassion for aged Daunus  
And give me back to him; or if that is the way it must be,  
Give back my dead body. You have won. The Italians have seen me  
Beaten, these hands outstretched. Lavinia is yours to wed.  
Don't carry hatred further.

935

Aeneas stood over him, poised  
On the edge of the stroke; but his eyes were restless, he did not  
strike.

And now what Turnus had said was taking effect, was making  
him

940

More and more indecisive, when on his enemy's shoulder  
He noticed the fatal baldric, the belt with its glittering studs—  
How well he knew it!—which Turnus had stripped from young  
Pallas after  
He'd killed him, and put on himself—a symbol of triumph and  
doom.

915. *Rutuli*: the Italian troops watching the combat between Turnus and Aeneas.

Aeneas fastened his eyes on this relic, this sad reminder 945  
 Of all the pain Pallas' death had caused. Rage shook him. He looked  
 Frightening. He said:—

Do you hope to get off now, wearing the spoils  
 You took from my Pallas? It's he, it's Pallas who strikes this blow—  
 The victim shedding his murderer's blood in retribution!

So saying, Aeneas angrily plunged his sword full into 950  
 Turnus' breast. The body went limp and cold. With a deep sigh  
 The unconsenting spirit fled to the shades below.

## The New Testament\*

[*The Birth and Youth of Jesus*]†

2. And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world<sup>1</sup> should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David;) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ<sup>2</sup> the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known

\* The text of these selections from the Holy Bible is that of the King James, or Authorized, Version.

† Luke 2:1-52.

1. the Roman Empire.

2. A Greek word meaning "anointed," used of kings, priests, and the Deliverer promised by the Prophets.

abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called *JESUS*,<sup>3</sup> which was so named of the angel<sup>4</sup> before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification<sup>5</sup> according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb<sup>6</sup> shall be called holy to the Lord;) and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles,<sup>7</sup> and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again<sup>8</sup> of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon

3. a form of the name Joshua, which means "he shall save."

4. in the Annunciation to Mary. (Luke 1:31.)

5. For the law here referred to, see Leviticus 12.

6. first-born son. The first-born son was regarded as belonging to God. See Exodus 13:2.

7. non-Jews.

8. The Greek word is the one always used of the resurrection of the dead.

him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors,<sup>9</sup> both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

9. teachers, rabbis.

[*The Teaching of Jesus*]

[THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT]\*

5. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?<sup>1</sup> it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

\* Matthew 5:1—7:29.

1. how can it regain its savor?



Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel,<sup>2</sup> but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes<sup>3</sup> and Pharisees,<sup>4</sup> ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca,<sup>5</sup> shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.<sup>6</sup> Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into

2. a household vessel with the capacity of a bushel.

3. the official interpreters of the Sacred Scriptures.

4. a sect which insisted on strict observance of the Mosaic law.

5. The word means "empty."

6. The reference is to Jewish legal institutions. The penalties which might be inflicted for murder (see the opening sentence of this paragraph) were death by the sword (a sentence of a

local court, "the judgment"), death by stoning (the sentence of a higher court, "the council"), and lastly the burning of the criminal's body in the place where refuse was thrown, Gehenna, which is hence used as a name for hell. Jesus compares the different degrees of punishment (administered by God) for the new sins which he here lists to the degrees of punishment recognized by Jewish law.

hell. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans<sup>7</sup> the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

6. Take heed that ye do not your alms<sup>8</sup> before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners

7. the men who collected the taxes for the Roman tax-farming corpora-

tions; they were, naturally, universally despised and hated.

8. charitable actions.

of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single,<sup>9</sup> thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his

9. clear.

glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles<sup>10</sup> seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

7. Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judged, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Enter ye in at the strait<sup>11</sup> gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth

10. non-Jews.

11. narrow.

not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

[PARABLES OF JESUS]\*

15. Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

And he spoke this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many

\* Luke 15:1-32.

days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

[*The Betrayal of Jesus*]\*

26. . . . Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

\* Matthew 26:14-75.

Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread<sup>1</sup> the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dipperth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is writtē of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament,<sup>2</sup> which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended<sup>3</sup> because of me this night: for it is written,<sup>4</sup> I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee,<sup>5</sup> and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch<sup>6</sup> with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face,

1. held in remembrance of the delivery of the Jews from captivity in Egypt. See Exodus 12.

2. i.e., of the new covenant, or agreement. Jesus compares himself to the lamb that was killed at the Passover as a sign of the covenant between God

and the Jews.

3. The Greek means literally, "you will be made to stumble."

4. See Zechariah 13:7.

5. James and John.

6. stay awake.

and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves,<sup>7</sup> from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And behold, one of them<sup>8</sup> which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions<sup>9</sup> of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end. Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness<sup>10</sup> against Jesus, to put him to death; but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these

7. clubs, sticks.

8. This was Peter.

9. The legion was a Roman military

formation; its full complement was six thousand men.

10. evidence.



witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said:<sup>11</sup> nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent<sup>12</sup> his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.<sup>13</sup> Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted <sup>14</sup> him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth<sup>15</sup> thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

11. an affirmative phrase.

12. tore.

13. liable to the death penalty.

14. beat.

15. betrays. Peter's speech revealed his Galilean origin.

*[The Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus]\**

27. When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: and when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.<sup>1</sup>

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they

\* Matthew 27:1-66.

1. His official title was procurator of the province of Judea. The Roman policy was to allow the Jews as much

independence as possible (especially in religious matters), but only the Roman authorities could impose a death sentence.

took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field,<sup>2</sup> to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy<sup>3</sup> the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me. And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

And when he was accused of<sup>4</sup> the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.<sup>5</sup> Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.<sup>6</sup>

When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.<sup>7</sup> And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged<sup>8</sup> Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon

2. a field which had been dug for potter's clay, and was consequently not worth very much as land.

3. Jeremiah. The prophecy here quoted is a version of Zechariah 11:13.

4. by

5. under sentence of death for sedition and murder.

6. i.e., to the Roman authorities.

7. the regular Roman punishment for sedition.

8. whipped, a routine part of the punishment.

his head, and a reed<sup>9</sup> in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene,<sup>10</sup> Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall:<sup>11</sup> and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.<sup>12</sup> And sitting down they watched him there; and set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?<sup>13</sup> Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar,<sup>14</sup> and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias<sup>15</sup> will come to save him.

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple<sup>16</sup> was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and

9. to represent the king's scepter.

10. on the coast of North Africa.

11. The Greek word translated "vinegar" describes a sour wine which was the regular drink of the Roman soldiery. The addition of bitter gall is further mockery.

12. *that it might . . . cast lots*: It is generally agreed that this is a late

addition to the text.

13. the opening words of Psalm 22. The actual words of Jesus, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" are Aramaic, the spoken Hebrew of the period.

14. See footnote 11.

15. the prophet Elijah.

16. the curtain which screened off the holy of holies.

went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion,<sup>17</sup> and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children. When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple. He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure<sup>18</sup> until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch:<sup>19</sup> go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

17. the Roman officer in charge of the execution.

18. guarded.

19. police force.

[*The Resurrection*]\*

28. In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held him by the feet, and wor-

\* Matthew 28:1-20.

shipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

*The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians\**

1. Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes<sup>1</sup> our brother, Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth,<sup>2</sup> to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:<sup>3</sup> so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm<sup>4</sup> you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>5</sup> Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in

\* I Corinthians 1:1—2:16, 7:1—40, 13:1—13, 15:1—58.

1. unknown, presumably a member of the Corinthian church with whom Paul here associates himself.

2. a rich commercial city, capital of the Roman province of Achaëa. Corinth was famous in ancient times as a luxurious pleasure resort.

3. Paul had founded the church at Corinth. The phrase means "since my preaching has taken firm hold on you."

4. strengthen.

5. This opening passage is an elaborate form of the customary beginning of a letter; the simple form would read, "Paul and Sosthenes to the Church of God in Corinth, greeting."

the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe,<sup>6</sup> that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos;<sup>7</sup> and I of Cephas;<sup>8</sup> and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus<sup>9</sup> and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides,<sup>10</sup> I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish<sup>11</sup> foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written,<sup>12</sup> I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe?<sup>13</sup> where is the disputer of this world?<sup>14</sup> hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that<sup>15</sup> in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;<sup>16</sup> but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh,<sup>17</sup> not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

2. And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

6. unidentified.

7. Apollos visited Corinth after Paul; he was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures." See Acts 18:24-28.

8. Peter.

9. Paul's first important convert at Corinth. See Acts 18:8.

10. apart from these.

11. the unbelievers.

12. in Isaiah 29:14.

13. the professional interpreter of the Jewish law.

14. probably a reference to Greek philosophical speculation.

15. since.

16. The Jews expected some supernatural confirmation of the divinity of Christ; the Greeks demanded philosophical consistency.

17. according to the standards of this world.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit<sup>18</sup> we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we ~~speak~~, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which ~~the~~ Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of ~~God~~: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, ~~because~~ they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth<sup>19</sup> all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath ~~known~~ the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we ~~have~~ the mind of Christ.

7. Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: it is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.<sup>19</sup> For I would that all men were even as I myself.<sup>20</sup> But every man hath his proper gift

18. yet.

19. i.e., marriage is permissible, but

not commanded.

20. i.e., celibate.

of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain,<sup>21</sup> let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: if any brother<sup>22</sup> hath a wife that believeth not,<sup>23</sup> and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.<sup>24</sup> Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant?<sup>25</sup> care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.<sup>26</sup> For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price;<sup>27</sup> be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress,<sup>28</sup> I say, that it is good for a man so to be.<sup>29</sup> Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if<sup>30</sup> thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the

21. control themselves (compare "continence").

22. a member of the church; the terms "brother" and "sister" are used in this sense throughout.

23. is not a Christian.

24. Whatever the precise meaning of this passage may be, its drift is clear. Race (whether one is gentile or Jew) does not matter; all that matters is "the keeping of the commandments of God."

25. The Greek word means "slave."

26. The Greek is not very clear, but seems to mean, "Even if you can become free, choose rather to remain a slave."

27. the blood of Christ.

28. variously interpreted. It may be a reference to the sorrows and persecutions prophesied by Jesus in Matthew 24:61 ff.

29. i.e., virgin.

30. and if: if.



flesh: but I spare you.<sup>31</sup> But this I say, brethren, the time is short:<sup>32</sup> it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion<sup>33</sup> of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you,<sup>34</sup> but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin,<sup>35</sup> if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. The wife<sup>36</sup> is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.<sup>37</sup> But she is happier if she so<sup>38</sup> abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

13. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity,<sup>39</sup> I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long,<sup>39</sup> and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all

31. I am trying to spare you (trouble in the flesh).

32. either, "man's life is short" or, "the time before the Second Coming is short."

33. shape, form.

34. i.e., this is not a command, but a suggestion.

35. daughter.

36. to a Christian.

37. unmarried.

38. love.

39. is long-suffering, patient.

things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly;<sup>40</sup> but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

15. Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;<sup>41</sup> and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas,<sup>42</sup> then of the twelve;<sup>43</sup> after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.<sup>44</sup> After that, he was seen of James;<sup>45</sup> then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also,<sup>46</sup> as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is

40. "darkly," because ancient mirrors were made not of glass but of bronze.

41. the Old Testament prophecies.

42. Peter. See Luke 24:34.

43. the Apostles. See Luke 24:36 ff.

44. dead.

45. the brother of Jesus.

46. For an account of this see Acts 9. Paul (or Saul, as he was called before his conversion), engaged in per-

secuting the Christians, was on the road to Damascus when "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Paul went on to Damascus, and instead of persecuting the Christians, preached the gospel of Christ.

not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits<sup>47</sup> of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead,<sup>48</sup> if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? and why stand we in jeopardy<sup>49</sup> every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus,<sup>50</sup> what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame. But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened,<sup>51</sup> except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance<sup>52</sup> of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from

47. the symbolic promise of resurrection for them all.

48. The phrase is obscure and has been the subject of much controversy. It is a reference to some form of baptism (perhaps peculiar to Corinth) which implied belief in the resurrection of the dead. If there is no resurrection, the ceremony is meaningless.

49. in danger. Why run the constant

risk of persecution and death, if there is to be no resurrection? To be a Christian is to "die daily."

50. Christians were often, in the later persecutions, made to fight wild beasts in the arena. But there is no record of this happening to Paul; the phrase must be another metaphor for the dangers which surrounded him.

51. brought to life.

52. perhaps.

another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written,<sup>53</sup> The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,<sup>54</sup> Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

53. See Genesis 2:7.

54. See Isaiah 25:8.

## PETRONIUS

(died 65 A.D.)

Satyricon\*

### *The Banquet of Trimalchio*

[The narrator, Encolpius, is a penniless vagabond who is a student of rhetoric under a master named Agamemnon. His close associates are Ascyltos, a fellow student, and Giton, a handsome boy who has no particular occupation. After some disreputable and very tiring adventures they are invited, as pupils of Agamemnon, to a

\* Probably written during the principate of Nero (54–68 A.D.). Our selection is one of the best-known parts of the work and is reprinted by permission

of the publishers from the Loeb Classical Library edition of Petronius, translated by M. Heseltine.

banquet. The scene of the story is an unidentified city in southern Italy, the time probably about 50 A.D.]

We were making some melancholy plans for avoiding the coming storm,<sup>1</sup> when one of Agamemnon's servants came up as we stood hesitating, and said, "Do you not know at whose house it is to-day? Trimalchio,<sup>2</sup> a very rich man, who has a clock<sup>3</sup> and a uniformed trumpeter<sup>4</sup> in his dining-room, to keep telling him how much of his life is lost and gone." We forgot our troubles and hurried into our clothes, and told Giton, who till now had been waiting on us very willingly, to follow us to the baths.<sup>5</sup> We began to take a stroll in evening dress to pass the time, or rather to joke and mix with the groups of players, when all at once we saw a bald old man in a red-dish shirt playing at ball with some long-haired boys. It was not the boys that attracted our notice, though they deserved it, but the old gentleman, who was in his house-shoes, busily engaged with a green ball. He never picked it up if it touched the ground. A slave stood by with a bagful and supplied them to the players. We also observed a new feature in the game. Two eunuchs were standing at different points in the group. One held a silver jordan, one counted the balls, not as they flew from hand to hand in the rigour of the game, but when they dropped to the ground. We were amazed at such a display, and then Menclaus<sup>6</sup> ran up and said, "This is the man who will give you places at his table: indeed what you see is the overture to his dinner." Menclaus had just finished when Trimalchio cracked his fingers. One eunuch came up at this signal and held the jordan for him as he played. He relieved himself and called for a basin, dipped in his hands and wiped them on a boy's head.

I cannot linger over details. We went into the bath. We stayed till we ran with sweat, and then at once passed through into the cold water. Trimalchio was now anointed all over and rubbed down, not with towels, but with blankets of the softest wool. Three masseurs sat there drinking Falernian wine<sup>7</sup> under his eyes. They quarrelled and spilt a quantity. Trimalchio said they were drinking his health. Then he was rolled up in a scarlet woollen coat and put in a litter. Four runners decked with medals went before him, and a hand-cart on which his favourite rode. This was a wrinkled bleary-eyed boy uglier than his master Trimalchio. As he was being driven off, a musician with a tiny pair of pipes arrived, and played the whole way as though he were whispering secrets in his ear.

1. a repetition of the unsavory incidents they have just been through.

2. The name means "triple unpleasant" or "triple powerful."

3. at this time a rare and expensive article.

4. to sound off every hour on the hour.

5. a public institution. They were magnificent buildings, containing not only baths of many types and temperatures, but places for conversation and games and even libraries.

6. appropriately enough, Agamemnon's assistant in instruction.

7. a famous wine from Campania, the district south of Rome.

We followed, lost in wonder, and came with Agamemnon to the door. A notice was fastened on the doorpost: "NO SLAVE TO GO OUT OF DOORS EXCEPT BY THE MASTER'S ORDERS. PENALTY, ONE HUNDRED STRIPES." Just at the entrance stood a porter in green clothes, with a cherry-coloured belt, shelling peas in a silver dish. A golden cage hung in the doorway, and a spotted magpie in it greeted visitors. I was gazing at all this, when I nearly fell backwards and broke my leg. For on the left hand as you went in, not far from the porter's office, a great dog on a chain was painted on the wall, and over him was written in large letters "BEWARE OF THE DOG." My friends laughed at me, but I plucked up courage and went on to examine the whole wall. It had a picture of a slave-market on it, with the persons' names. Trimalchio was there with long hair, holding a Mercury's staff.<sup>8</sup> Minerva<sup>9</sup> had him by the hand and was leading him into Rome. Then the painstaking artist had given a faithful picture of his whole career with explanations: how he had learned to keep accounts, and how at last he had been made steward. At the point where the wall-space gave out, Mercury had taken him by the chin, and was whirling him up to his high official throne.<sup>10</sup> . . .

I began to ask the porter what pictures they had in the hall. "The Iliad and the Odyssey," he said, "and the gladiator's show given by Laenas." I could not take the whole multiplicacity in at once. . . .

We now went through to the dining-room. . . . We sat down, and boys from Alexandria poured water cooled with snow over our hands. Others followed and knelt down at our feet, and proceeded with great skill to pare our hangnails. Even this unpleasant duty did not silence them, but they kept singing at their work. I wanted to find out whether the whole household could sing, so I asked for a drink. A ready slave repeated my order in a chant not less shrill. They all did the same if they were asked to hand anything. It was more like an actor's dance than a gentleman's dining-room. But some rich and tasty whets for the appetite were brought on; for every one had now sat down except Trimalchio, who had the first place kept for him in the new style.<sup>11</sup> A donkey in Corinthian bronze stood on the side-board, with panniers holding olives, white in one side, black in the other. Two dishes hid the donkey; Trimalchio's name and their weight in silver was engraved on their edges. There were also dormice rolled in honey and poppy-seed, and supported on little bridges soldered to the plate. Then there were hot sausages laid on a silver grill, and under the grill damsons and seeds of pomegranate.

8. Mercury (Hermes) was a trickster, and the patron god of businessmen.

9. the Roman counterpart of Athene.

10. Trimalchio was a priest of the

worship of the emperor, and entitled to sit on a throne at public functions.

11. a new and fashionable order of seating at a banquet.

While we were engaged with these delicacies, Trimalchio was conducted in to the sound of music, propped on the tiniest of pillows. A laugh escaped the unwary. His head was shaven and peered out of a scarlet cloak, and over the heavy clothes on his neck he had put on a napkin with a broad stripe and fringes hanging from it all round. On the little finger of his left hand he had an enormous gilt ring, and on the top joint of the next finger a smaller ring which appeared to me to be entirely gold, but was really set all round with iron cut out in little stars. Not content with this display of wealth, he bared his right arm, where a golden bracelet shone, and an ivory bangle clasped with a plate of bright metal. Then he said, as he picked his teeth with a silver quill, "It was not convenient for me to come to dinner yet, my friends, but I gave up all my own pleasure; I did not like to stay away any longer and keep you waiting. But you will not mind if I finish my game?" A boy followed him with a table of terebinth wood<sup>12</sup> and crystal pieces, and I noticed the prettiest thing possible. Instead of black and white counters they used gold and silver coins. Trimalchio kept passing every kind of remark as he played, and we were still busy with the hors d'œuvres, when a tray was brought in with a basket on it, in which there was a hen made of wood, spreading out her wings as they do when they are sitting. The music grew loud: two slaves at once came up and began to hunt in the straw. Peahen's eggs were pulled out and handed to the guests. Trimalchio turned his head to look, and said, "I gave orders, my friends, that peahen's eggs should be put under a common hen. And upon my oath I am afraid they are hatched by now. But we will try whether they are still fresh enough to suck." We took our spoons, half-a-pound in weight at least, and hammered at the eggs, which were balls of fine meal. I was on the point of throwing away my portion. I thought a peachick had already formed. But hearing a practised diner say, "What treasure have we here?" I poked through the shell with my finger, and found a fat becafico<sup>13</sup> rolled up in spiced yolk of egg.

Trimalchio had now stopped his game, and asked for all the same dishes, and in a loud voice invited any of us, who wished, to take a second glass of mead.<sup>14</sup> Suddenly the music gave the sign, and the light dishes were swept away by a troop of singing servants. An entrée-dish happened to fall in the rush, and a boy picked it up from the ground. Trimalchio saw him, and directed that he should be punished by a box on the ear, and made to throw down the dish again. A chairman followed and began to sweep out the silver with a broom among the other rubbish. Then two long-haired Ethiopians with little wineskins, just like the men who scatter sand in an am-

12. a very hard wood which takes a high polish and is very expensive (like everything Trimalchio has).

13. fig-pecker (a bird).

14. This particular mixture consisted of four parts of wine to one of honey.

phitheatre,<sup>15</sup> came in and gave us wine to wash our hands in, for no one offered us water.

We complimented our host on his arrangements. "Mars loves a fair field," said he, "and so I gave orders that every one should have a separate table. In that way these filthy slaves will not make us so hot by crowding past us."

Just then some glass jars carefully fastened with gypsum were brought on, with labels tied to their necks, inscribed, "Falernian of Opimius's vintage,<sup>16</sup> 100 years in bottle." As we were poring over the labels Trimalchio clapped his hands and cried, "Ah me, so wine lives longer than miserable man. So let us be merry. Wine is life. I put on real wine of Opimius's year. I produced some inferior stuff yesterday, and there was a much finer set of people to dinner." As we drank and admired each luxury in detail, a slave brought in a silver skeleton, made so that its limbs and spine could be moved and bent in every direction. He put it down once or twice on the table so that the supple joints showed several attitudes, and Trimalchio said appropriately: "Alas for us poor mortals, all that poor man is is nothing. So we shall all be, after the world below takes us away. Let us live then while it goes well with us."<sup>17</sup>

After we had praised this outburst a dish followed, not at all of the size we expected; but its novelty drew every eye to it. . . .

After this dish Trimalchio got up and retired. With the tyrant away we had our freedom, and we began to draw the conversation of our neighbours. Dama began after calling for bumpers: "Day is nothing. Night is on you before you can turn round. Then there is no better plan than going straight out of bed to dinner. It is precious cold. I could scarcely get warm in a bath. But a hot drink is as good as an overcoat. I have taken some deep drinks and I am quite soaked. The wine has gone to my head."

Selcucus took up the tale and said: "I do not wash every day; the bathman pulls you to pieces like a fuller,<sup>18</sup> the water bites, and the heart of man melts away daily. But when I have put down some draughts of mead I let the cold go to the devil. Besides, I could not wash; I was at a funeral to-day. A fine fellow, the excellent Chrysanthus, has breathed his last. It was but the other day he greeted me. I feel as if I were speaking with him now. Dear, dear, how we bladders of wind strut about. We are meaner than flies; flies have their virtues, we are nothing but bubbles. And what would have happened if he had not tried the fasting cure? No water touched

15. after a gladiatorial contest, to absorb the blood.

16. The wine was labeled with the name of the man who was consul in the year it was bottled. Opimius was consul in 121 B.C. Since it was in this year that the custom of dating the wine by the

consul's name began, Trimalchio's wine is the oldest possible.

17. These platitudes are delivered in verse.

18. cleaner of clothes. The fullers used very strong solvents.



his lips for five days, not a morsel of bread. Yet he went over to the majority.<sup>19</sup> The doctors killed him—no, it was his unhappy destiny; a doctor is nothing but a sop to conscience. Still, he was carried out in fine style on a bier covered with a good pall. The mourning was very good too—he had freed a number of slaves—even though his own wife was very grudging over her tears. I dare say he did not treat her particularly kindly. But women one and all are a set of vultures. It is no use doing anyone a kindness; it is all the same as if you put your kindness in a well. But an old love pinches like a crab.”

He was a bore, and Phileros shouted out: “Oh, let us remember the living. He has got his deserts; he lived decently and died decently. What has he got to grumble at? He started with twopence, and he was always ready to pick a halfpenny out of the dirt with his teeth. So he grew and grew like a honey-comb. Upon my word, I believe he left a clear hundred thousand, and all in hard cash. Still, I have eaten the dog’s tongue, I must speak the truth. He had a rough mouth, and talked continually, and was more of a discord than a man. His brother was a fine fellow, stood by his friends, open-handed and kept a good table. To begin with, he caught a Tartar;<sup>20</sup> but his first vintage set him on his feet: he used to get any price he asked for his wine. And what made him hold up his head was that he came into an estate out of which he got more than had been left to him. And that blockhead,<sup>21</sup> in a fit of passion with his brother, left the family property away to some nobody or other. He that flies from his own family has far to travel. But he had some eaves-dropping slaves who did for him. A man who is always ready to believe what is told him will never do well, especially a business man. Still no doubt he enjoyed himself every day of his life. Blessed is he who gets the gift, not he for whom it is meant. He was a real Fortune’s darling, lead turned gold in his hands. Yes, it is easy when everything goes fair and square. And how many years do you think he had on his shoulders? Seventy and more. But he was a tough old thing, carried his age well, as black as a crow. I had known him world without end, and he was still merry.<sup>22</sup> I really do not think he spared a single creature in his house. No, he was still a gay one, ready for anything. Well, I do not blame him: it is only his past pleasures he can take with him.”

So said Phileros, but Ganymede broke in: “You go talking about things which are neither in heaven nor earth, and none of you care all the time how the price of food pinches. I swear I cannot get hold of a mouthful of bread to-day. And how the drought goes on. There has been a famine for a whole year now. Damn the magis-

19. died.

20. His first business venture was a failure.

21. Chrysanthus.

22. lustful.

trates, who play 'Scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours,' in league with the bakers. So the little people come off badly; for the jaws of the upper classes are always keeping carnival. I do wish we had the bucks<sup>23</sup> I found here when I first came out of Asia. That was life. If the flour was any but the finest, they beat those vampires<sup>24</sup> into a jelly, until they put the fear of God into them. I remember Safinius: he used to live then by the old arch when I was a boy. He was more of a mustard-pot than a man: used to scorch the ground wherever he trod. Still he was straight; you could trust him, a true friend: you would not be afraid to play at morra<sup>25</sup> with him in the dark. How he used to dress them down in the senate-house, every one of them, never using roundabout phrases, making a straight-forward attack. And when he was pleading in the courts, his voice used to swell like a trumpet. Never any sweating or spitting: I imagine he had a touch of the Asiatic style.<sup>26</sup> And how kindly he returned one's greeting, calling every one by name quite like one of ourselves. So at that time food was dirt-cheap. You could buy a larger loaf for twopence than you and your better half together could get through. One sees a bun bigger now. Lord, things are worse every day. This town goes downhill like the calf's tail. But why do we put up with a magistrate not worth three pepper-corns, who cares more about putting twopence in his purse than keeping us alive? He sits grinning at home, and pockets more money a day than other people have for a fortune. I happen to know where he came by a thousand in gold. If we had any spunk in us he would not be so pleased with himself. Nowadays people are lions in their own houses, and foxes out of doors. I have already eaten my rags, and if these prices keep up, I shall have to sell my cottages. Whatever is to happen if neither the gods nor man will take pity on this town? As I hope to have joy of my children, I believe all these things come from Heaven. For no one now believes that the gods are gods. There is no fasting done, no one cares a button for religion: they all shut their eyes and count their own goods. In old days the mothers in their best robes used to climb the hill with bare feet and loose hair, pure in spirit, and pray Jupiter to send rain. Then it used promptly to rain by the bucket: it was now or never: and they all came home, wet as drowned rats. As it is, the gods are gouty in the feet because we are sceptics. So our fields lie baking—"

"Oh, don't be so gloomy," said Echion, the old clothes dealer. "There's ups and there's downs," as the country bumpkin said

23. bold young bloods; the literal meaning of the Latin is "lions."

24. the bakers.

25. a game which requires the players to match the number of fingers held out by the opponent.

26. an ornate and elaborate oratorical

style which became fashionable in Rome in the first century B.C. Ganymede's standards can be gauged from his judgment that to refrain from sweating and spitting while making a speech shows the influence of the "Asiatic style."

when he lost his spotted pig. What is not to-day, will be to-morrow: so we trudge through life. I engage you could not name a better country to call one's own, if only the men in it had sense. It has its troubles now like others. We must not be too particular when there is a sky above us all. If you were anywhere else, you would say that roast pork walked in the streets here. Just think, we are soon to be given a superb spectacle lasting three days; not simply a troupe of professional gladiators, but a large number of them freedmen. And our good Titus has a big imagination and is hot-blooded: it will be one thing or another, something real anyway. I know him very well, and he is all against half-measures. He will give you the finest blades, no running away, butchery done in the middle, where the whole audience can see it. And he has the wherewithal; he came into thirty million when his father came to grief. If he spends four hundred thousand, his estate will never feel it, and his name will live for ever. He has already collected some clowns, and a woman to fight from a chariot, and Glyco's steward,<sup>27</sup> who was caught amusing Glyco's wife. You will see the crowd quarrel, jealous husbands against gallants. A twopenny-halfpenny fellow like Glyco goes throwing his steward to the beasts. He only gives himself away. It is not the slave's fault; he had to do as he was told. That filthy wife of his rather deserved to be tossed by the bull. But a man who cannot beat his donkey, beats the saddle. How did Glyco suppose that a sprig of Hemogenes's sowing<sup>28</sup> would ever come to a good end? He was *one* for paring the claws of a kite on the wing, and you do not gather figs from thistles. Glyco? why, Glyco has given away his own flesh and blood. He will be branded as long as he lives, and nothing but death will wipe it out. But a man must have his faults. My nose prophesies a good meal<sup>29</sup> from Mammaea, twopence each for me and mine. If he does, he will put Norbanus<sup>30</sup> quite in the shade. You know he will beat him hands down. After all, what has Norbanus ever done for us? He produced some decayed twopenny-halfpenny gladiators, who would have fallen flat if you breathed on them; I have seen better ruffians turned in to fight the wild beasts. He shed the blood of some mounted infantry that might have come off a lamp;<sup>31</sup> dung-hill cocks you would have called them: one a spavined mule, the other bandy-legged, and the holder of the bye,<sup>32</sup> just one corpse instead of another, and hamstrung. One man, a Thracian, had some stuffing, but he too fought according to the rule of the schools.<sup>33</sup>

27. a household slave. His master was permitted by law to condemn him to fight wild beasts in the arena.

28. Presumably Hemogenes was the father of Glyco's wife.

29. a public banquet, to be given by Mammaea. Candidates for office gave

banquets and gladiatorial shows to win popular favor.

30. a well-known local lawyer.

31. as small as the gladiators pictured on lamp-covers.

32. a replacement.

33. i.e., halfheartedly; the profes-

In short, they were all flogged afterwards. How the great crowd roared at them, 'Lay it on!' They were mere runaways, to be sure. 'Still,' says Norbanus, 'I did give you a treat.' Yes, and I clap my hands at you. Reckon it up, and I give you more than I got. One good turn deserves another. Now, Agamemnon, you look as if you were saying, 'What is this bore chattering for?' Only because you have the gift of tongues and do not speak. You do not come off our shelf, and so you make fun of the way we poor men talk. We know you are mad with much learning. But I tell you what; can I persuade you to come down to my place some day and see my little property? We shall find something to eat, a chicken and eggs: it will be delightful, even though the weather this year has made everything grow at the wrong time: we shall find something to fill ourselves up with. My little boy is growing into a follower of yours already. He can do simple division now; if he lives, you will have a little servant at your heels. Whenever he has any spare time, he never lifts his nose from the slate. He is clever, and comes of a good stock, even though he is too fond of birds. I killed three of his goldfinches just lately, and said a weasel had eaten them. But he has found some other hobby, and has taken to painting with great pleasure. He has made a hole in his Greek now, and begins to relish Latin finely, even though his master is conceited and will not stick to one thing at a time. The boy comes asking me to give him some writing to do, though he does not want to work. I have another boy who is no scholar, but very inquiring, and can teach you more than he knows himself. So on holidays he generally comes home, and is quite pleased whatever you give him. I bought the child some books with red-letter headings in them a little time ago. I want him to have a smack of law in order to manage the property. Law has bread and butter in it. He has dipped quite deep enough into literature. If he is restless, I mean to have him learn a trade, a barber or an auctioneer, or at least a barrister,<sup>34</sup> something that he can carry to the grave with him. So I drum it into him every day: 'Mark my words, Primigenius, whatever you learn, you learn for your own good. Look at Phileros, the barrister: if he had not worked, he would not be keeping the wolf from the door to-day. It is not so long since he used to carry things round on his back and sell them, and now he makes a brave show even against Norbanus. Yes, education is a treasure, and culture never dies.' "

Gossip of this kind was in the air, when Trimalchio came in mopping his brow, and washed his hands in scent. After a short pause, he said, "You will excuse me, gentlemen? My bowels have not been working for several days. All the doctors are puzzled. Still,

sional gladiators were no more anxious  
to get killed than their trainers and

owners were to lose them.  
34. lawyer.

I found pomegranate rind useful, and pinewood boiled in vinegar. I hope now my stomach will learn to observe its old decencies. Besides, I have such rumblings inside me you would think there was a bull there. So if any of you gentlemen wishes to retire there is no need to be shy about it. We were none of us born quite solid. I cannot imagine any torture like holding oneself in. The one thing Jupiter himself cannot forbid is that we should have relief. Why do you laugh, Fortunata; it is you who are always keeping me awake all night. Of course, as far as I am concerned, anyone may relieve himself in the dining-room.<sup>35</sup> The doctors forbid retention. But if the matter is serious, everything is ready outside: water, towels, and all the other little comforts. Take my word for it, vapours go to the brain and make a disturbance throughout the body. I know many people have died this way, by refusing to admit the truth to themselves." We thanked him for his generosity and kindness, and then tried to suppress our laughter by drinking hard and fast. . . .

Then he told them to fetch a cook at once, and without waiting for our opinion ordered the eldest pig to be killed, and said in a loud voice, "Which division of the household do you belong to?" The man said he came from the fortieth. "Were you purchased or born on the estate?" "Neither; I was left to you under Pansa's will." "Well then," said Trimalchio, "mind you serve this carefully, or I will have you degraded to the messengers' division." So the cook was reminded of his master's power, and the dish that was to be carried him off to the kitchen.<sup>36</sup> Trimalchio turned to us with a mild expression and said, "I will change the wine if you do not like it. You will have to give it its virtues. Under God's providence, I do not have to buy it. Anything here which makes your mouths water is grown on a country estate of mine which I know nothing about as yet. I believe it is on the boundary of Terracina and Tarentum. Just now I want to join up all Sicily with properties of mine, so that if I take a fancy to go to Africa I shall travel through my own land. But do tell me, Agamemnon, what declamation<sup>37</sup> did you deliver in school to-day? Of course, I do not practise in court myself, but I learned literature for domestic purposes. And do not imagine that I despise learning. I have got two libraries, one Greek and one Latin. So give me an outline of your speech, if you love me." Then Agamemnon said: "A poor man and a rich man were once at enmity." "But what is a poor man?" Trimalchio replied. "Very clever," said Agamemnon, and went on expounding some problem or other. Trimalchio at once retorted: "If the thing really happened, there is no problem; if it never happened, it is all

35. as Trimalchio did while playing ball.

36. The pig that was to be killed preceded the cook back to the kitchen.

37. a full-dress speech on a controversial or literary subject, made as a school exercise. Compare St. Augustine's account of his education (pp. 445-446).

nonsense." We followed up this and other sallies with the most extravagant admiration. "Tell me, dear Agamemnon," said Trimalchio, "do you know anything of the twelve labours of Hercules, or the story of Ulysses and how the Cyclops twisted his thumb with the tongs?"<sup>38</sup> I used to read these things in Homer when I was a boy. Yes, and I myself with my own eyes saw the Sibyl hanging in a cage; and when the boys cried at her: 'Sibyl, Sibyl, what do you want?' 'I would that I were dead,' she used to answer."

[Presents for the guests are distributed with a slave announcing the nature of each gift and making in each case an atrocious pun on the name of the guest.]

We laughed loud and long: there were any number of these jokes, which have now escaped my memory.

Ascyrtos let himself go completely, threw up his hands and made fun of everything, and laughed till he cried. This annoyed one of Trimalchio's fellow-freedmen, the man who was sitting next above me. "What are you laughing at, sheep's head?" he said. "Are our host's good things not good enough for you? I suppose you are richer and used to better living? As I hope to have the spirits of this place on my side, if I had been sitting next him I should have put a stopper on his bleating by now. A nice young shaver to laugh at other people! Some vagabond fly-by-night not worth his salt. In fact, when I've done with him he won't know where to take refuge. Upon my word, I am not easily annoyed as a rule, but in rotten flesh worms will breed. He laughs. What has he got to laugh about? Did his father pay solid gold for him when he was a baby? A Roman knight,<sup>39</sup> are you? Well, I am a king's son. 'Then why have you been a slave?' Because I went into service<sup>40</sup> to please myself, and preferred being a Roman citizen to going on paying taxes as a provincial.<sup>41</sup> And now I hope I live such a life that no one can jeer at me. I am a man among men; I walk about bare-headed; I owe nobody a brass farthing; I have never been in the Courts; no one has ever said to me in public, 'Pay me what you owe me.' I have bought a few acres and collected a little capital; I have to feed twenty bellics and a dog; I ransomed my fellow slave to preserve her from indignities; I paid a thousand silver pennies for my own freedom; I was made a priest of Augustus<sup>42</sup> and excused the fees; I hope to die so that I need not blush in my grave. But are you so full of business that you have no time to look behind you? You can

38. He refers to Odysseus' adventures in the cave of the Cyclops (in Homer's *Odyssey*, Book IX). In spite of what he says, he has never read Homer; he betrays a monstrous ignorance.

39. a Roman class including all who had property above a certain amount.

40. slavery.

41. as a tributary king in the provinces; he continues his sarcasm.

42. The state religion was the worship of Augustus, the emperor. The office of priest might be sold or conferred.

see the lice on others, but not the bugs on yourself. No one finds us comic but you: there is your schoolmaster, older and wiser than you: he likes us. You are a child just weaned, you cannot squeak out *mu* or *ma*, you are a clay-pot, a wash-leather in water, softer, not superior. If you are richer, then have two breakfasts and two dinners a day. I prefer my reputation to any riches. One word more. Who ever had to speak to me twice? I was a slave for forty years, and nobody knew whether I was a slave or free. I was a boy with long curls when I came to this place; they had not built the town-hall then. But I tried to please my master, a fine dignified gentleman whose little finger was worth more than your whole body. And there were people in the house who put out a foot to trip me up here and there. But still—God bless my master!—I struggled through. These are real victories: being born free is as easy as saying, ‘Come here.’ But why do you stare at me now like a goat in a field of vetch?”

At this remark Giton, who was standing by my feet, burst out with an unseemly laugh, which he had now been holding in for a long while. Ascyrtos’s enemy noticed him, and turned his abuse on to the boy. “What,” he said, “are you laughing too, you curly-headed onion? A merry Saturnalia<sup>43</sup> indeed: what, have we December here? When did you pay five per cent on your freedom?<sup>44</sup> He doesn’t know what to do, the gallows-bird, the crows’-meat. I will call down the wrath of Jupiter at once on you and the fellow who cannot keep you in order. As sure as I get my bellyful, I would have given you what you deserve now on the spot, but for my respect for my fellow-freedman. We are getting on splendidly, but those fellows are fools, who don’t keep you in hand. Yes, like master, like man. I can scarcely hold myself in, and I am not naturally hot-tempered, but when I once begin I do not care two-pence for my own mother. Depend upon it, I shall meet you somewhere in public, you rat, you puff-ball. I will not grow an inch up or down until I have put your master’s head in a nettle-bed, and I shall have no mercy on you, I can tell you, however much you may call upon Jupiter in Olympus. Those pretty eight-inch curls and that twopenny master of yours will be no use to you. Depend upon it, you will come under the harrow; if I know my own name you will not laugh any more, though you may have a gold beard like a god. I will bring down the wrath of Athena on you and the man who first made a minion<sup>45</sup> of you.

43. a December festival in honor of an ancient Italian deity at which the normal order of everyday life was reversed and the slaves and children made fun of their masters.

44. The freed slave had to pay five per cent of his estimated value to the treasury. The question means, “You are

still a slave, since you don’t act like a free man.”

45. The Latin word is very contemptuous; it means literally “a come-here” and implies that Giton’s morals are no better than they should be (which is the truth).

"No, I never learned geometry, and criticism, and such like nonsense. But I know my tall letters,<sup>46</sup> and I can do any sum into pounds, shillings, and pence.<sup>47</sup> In fact, if you like, you and I will have a little bet. Come on, I put down the metal. Now I will show you that your father wasted the fees, even though you are a scholar in rhetoric. Look here:

'What part of us am I? I come far, I come wide.  
Now find me.'<sup>48</sup>

I can tell you what part of us runs and does not move from its place; what grows out of us and grows smaller. Ah! you run about and look scared and hustled, like a mouse in a pot. So keep your mouth shut, or do not worry your betters who are unaware of your existence; unless you think I have any respect for the boxwood rings<sup>49</sup> you stole from your young woman. May the God of grab<sup>50</sup> be on my side! Let us go on 'Change and borrow money: then you will see that my iron ring commands credit. My word, a draggled fox is a fine creature! I hope I may never get rich and make a good end, and have the people swearing by my death, if I do not put on the black cap and hunt you down everywhere. It was a fine fellow who taught you to behave like this, too; a chattering ape, not a master. We had some real schooling, for the master used to say, 'Are all your belongings safe? Go straight home, and don't stop to look round you; and mind you do not abuse your elders. Count up all the wastrels, if you like; not one of them is worth twopence in the end.' Yes, I thank God for education; it made me what I am." . . .

Meanwhile a priest's attendant<sup>51</sup> knocked at the dining-room door, and a man dressed in white for some festivity came in with a number of others. I was frightened by his solemn looks, and thought the mayor had arrived. So I tried to get up and plant my bare feet on the ground. Agamemnon laughed at my anxiety and said, "Control yourself, you silly fool! It is Habinnas of the priests' college, a monumental mason with a reputation for making first-class tombstones." I was relieved by this news, and lay down in my place again, and watched Habinnas' entrance with great astonishment. He was quite drunk, and had put his hands on his wife's shoulders;

46. the lettering of inscriptions on public monuments, which was naturally easier to read than the lettering of written books. About these smaller letters he makes no claim.

47. dollars and cents.

48. The freedman asks Giton three riddles as a proof of his superior intellect. There is disagreement about the answers; the most probable set proposed is: to the first, the foot; to the

second, the eye; and to the third, the hair.

49. This part of his speech is apparently addressed to Ascyrtos, who is wearing a gold ring. (Boxwood is yellow.)

50. a goblin named Occupo ("grab") who helps men engaged in business.

51. an attendant of a priest of the state cult of Augustus.



he had several wreaths on, and ointment was running down his forehead into his eyes. He sat down in the chief magistrate's place, and at once called for wine and hot water. Trimalchio was delighted at his good humour, and demanded a larger cup for himself, and asked him how he had been received. "We had everything there except you," was the reply, "for my eyes were here with you. Yes, it was really splendid. Scissa was having a funeral feast on the ninth<sup>52</sup> day for her poor dear slave, whom she set free on his death-bed. And I believe she will have an enormous sum<sup>53</sup> to pay the tax-collector, for they reckon that the dead man was worth fifty thousand. But anyhow it was a pleasant affair, even if we did have to pour half our drinks over his lamented bones." "Ah," said Trimalchio, "but what did you have for dinner?" "I will tell you if I can," he said, "but my memory is in such a fine way that I often forget my own name. Well, first we had a pig crowned with a wine-cup, garnished with honey cakes, and liver very well done, and beetroot of course, and pure wholemeal bread, which I prefer to white myself; it puts strength into you, and is good for the bowels. The next dish was a cold tart, with excellent Spanish wine poured over warm honey. Indeed I ate a lot of the tart, and gave myself such a soaking of honey. Pease and lupines were handed, a choice of nuts and an apple each. I took two myself, and I have got them here tied up in my napkin: for if I do not bring some present back for my pet slave-boy there will be trouble. Oh! yes, my wife reminds me. There was a piece of bear on a side dish. Scintilla<sup>54</sup> was rash enough to taste it, and nearly brought up her own inside. I ate over a pound myself, for it tasted like proper wild boar. What I say is this, since bears eat up us poor men, how much better right has a poor man to eat up a bear? To finish up with we had cheese mellowed in new wine, and snails all round, and pieces of tripe, and liver in little dishes, and eggs in caps, and turnip, and mustard, and a dish of forcemeat.<sup>55</sup> But hold hard, Palamedes.<sup>56</sup> Pickled olives were brought round in a dish too, and some greedy creatures took three handfuls. For we had let the ham go. But tell me, Gaius, why is Fortunata not at dinner?" "Do you not know her better?" said Trimalchio. "Until she has collected the silver, and divided the remains among the slaves, she will not let a drop of water pass her lips." "Oh," replied Habinnas, "but unless she is here I shall take myself off," and he was just getting up, when at a given signal all the slaves called "Fortunata" four times and more.

52. the last day of the period of mourning for the dead.

53. She would have to pay five per cent of his value (the tax was imposed when a slave was freed).

54. his wife.

55. The Latin has a strong expression which means "a mess."

56. obscure. Perhaps addressed to someone called Palamedes who is trying to interrupt him; or to himself, as a command to put an end to his list of dishes.

peius Trimalchio, freedman of Maecenas. The degree of Priest of Augustus was conferred upon him in his absence.<sup>62</sup> He might have been attendant on any magistrate in Rome, but refused it. God-fearing, gallant, constant, he started with very little and left thirty millions. He never listened to a philosopher. Fare thee well, Trimalchio: and thou too, passer-by.' "

[After a visit to the baths, where Encolpius and his friends make an unsuccessful attempt to escape, the dinner is resumed.]

After the good things were done, Trimalchio looked at the slaves and said, "Why have you not had dinner yet? Be off, and let some others come and wait." So another brigade appeared, and the old lot shouted, "Gaius, good-bye," and the new ones, "Hail! Gaius." After this, our jollity received its first shock; a rather comely boy came in among the fresh waiters, and Trimalchio took him and began to kiss him warmly. So Fortunata, to assert her rights at law, began to abuse Trimalchio, and called him a dirty disgrace for not behaving himself. At last she even added, "You hound." Her cursing annoyed Trimalchio, and he let fly a cup in her face. She shrieked as if her eye had been put out, and lifted her trembling hands to her face. Scintilla was frightened too, and shielded her quivering friend with her arms. While an officious slave held a cool little jar to her cheek, Fortunata leaned over it and began to groan and cry. But Trimalchio said, "What is it all about? This chorus-girl has no memory, yet I took her off the sale-platform and made her one of ourselves. But she puffs herself up like a frog, and will not spit for luck; a log she is, not a woman. But if you were born in a slum you cannot sleep in a palace. Damn my soul if I do not properly tame this shameless Cassandra. And I might have married ten million, wretched fool that I was! You know I am speaking the truth. Agatho, the perfumer of the rich woman next door, took me aside and said, 'I entreat you not to let your family die out.' But I, being a good chap, didn't wish to seem fickle, and so I have stuck the axe into my own leg. Very well, I will make you want to dig me up with your finger-nails. But you shall understand what you have done for yourself straight away. Habinnas, do not put any statue of her on my tomb, or I shall have nagging even when I am dead. And to show that I can do her a bad turn, I will not have her kiss me even when I am laid out."

After this flash of lightning Habinnas began to implore him to moderate his wrath. "We all have our faults," he said, "we are men, not angels." Scintilla cried and said the same, called him Gaius and besought him by his guardian angel to unbend. Trimalchio no longer restrained his tears, and said, "Habinnas, please, as you hope

62. Compare this with the prophecy made to Scipio that he would be elected consul in his absence (p. 356).

to enjoy your money, spit in my face if I have done anything wrong. I kissed that excellent boy not because he is beautiful, but because he is excellent: he can do division and read books at sight, he has bought a suit of Thracian armour out of his day's wages, purchased a round-backed chair with his own money, and two lads. Does he not deserve to be treated well by me? But Fortunata will not have it. Is that your feeling, my high-heeled hussy? I advise you to chew what you have bitten off, you vulture, and not make me show my teeth, my little dear: otherwise you shall know what my anger is. Mark my words: when once my mind is made up, the thing is fixed with a ten-inch nail. But we will think of the living. Please make yourselves comfortable, gentlemen. I was once just what you are, but by my own merits I have come to this. A bit of sound sense is what makes men; the rest is all rubbish. 'I buy well and sell well': some people will tell you differently. I am bursting with happiness. What, you snorer in bed, are you still whining? I will take care that you have something to whine over. Well, as I was just saying, self-denial has brought me into this fortune. When I came from Asia I was about as tall as this candle-stick. In fact I used to measure myself by it every day, and grease my lips from the lamp to grow a moustache the quicker. Still, I was my master's favourite for fourteen years. No disgrace in obeying your master's orders. Well, I used to amuse my mistress too. You know what I mean; I say no more, I am not a conceited man. Then, as the Gods willed, I became the real master of the house, and simply had his brains in my pocket. I need only add that I was joint residuary legatee with Caesar,<sup>63</sup> and came into an estate fit for a senator. But no one is satisfied with nothing. I conceived a passion for business. I will not keep you a moment—I built five ships, got a cargo of wine—which was worth its weight in gold at the time—and sent them to Rome. You may think it was a put-up job; every one was wrecked, truth and no fairy-tales. Neptune<sup>64</sup> gulped down thirty million in one day. Do you think I lost heart? Lord! no, I no more tasted my loss than if nothing had happened. I built some more, bigger, better and more expensive, so that no one could say I was not a brave man. You know, a huge ship has a certain security about her. I got another cargo of wine, bacon, beans, perfumes, and slaves. Fortunata did a noble thing at that time; she sold all her jewellery and all her clothes, and put a hundred gold pieces into my hand. They were the leaven of my fortune. What God wishes soon happens. I made a clear ten million on one voyage. I at once bought up all the estates which had belonged to my patron. I built a house, and bought slaves and cattle; whatever I touched grew

63. an honor which he shared with many others, for it was customary (as a prudent measure to avoid confiscation) to include a bequest to the em-

peror in one's will.

64. the Latin equivalent of Poseidon, the god of the sea.

like a honey-comb. When I came to have more than the whole revenues of my own country,<sup>65</sup> I threw up the game: I retired from active work and began to finance freedmen. I was quite unwilling to go on with my work when I was encouraged by an astrologer who happened to come to our town, a little Greek called Serapa, who knew the secrets of the Gods. He told me things that I had forgotten myself; explained everything from needle and thread upwards; knew my own inside, and only fell short of telling me what I had had for dinner the day before. You would have thought he had always lived with me. You remember, Habinnas?—I believe you were there?—‘You fetched your wife from you know where. You are not lucky in your friends. No one is ever as grateful to you as you deserve. You are a man of property. You are nourishing a viper in your bosom,’ and, though I must not tell you this, that even now I had thirty years four months and two days left to live. Moreover I shall soon come into an estate. My oracle tells me so. If I could only extend my boundaries to Apulia<sup>66</sup> I should have gone far enough for my lifetime. Meanwhile I built this house while Mercury watched over me. As you know, it was a tiny place; now it is a palace. It has four dining-rooms, twenty bedrooms, two marble colonnades, an upstairs dining-room, a bedroom where I sleep myself, this viper’s boudoir, an excellent room for the porter; there is plenty of spare room for guests. In fact when Scaurus<sup>67</sup> came he preferred staying here to anywhere else, and he has a family place by the sea. There are plenty of other things which I will show you in a minute. Take my word for it: if you have a penny, that is what you are worth; by what a man hath shall he be reckoned. So your friend who was once a worm is now a king. Meanwhile, Stichus, bring me the grave-clothes in which I mean to be carried out. And some ointment, and a mouthful out of that jar which has to be poured over my bones.”

In a moment Stichus had fetched a white winding-sheet and dress into the dining-room and . . . [Trimalchio] asked us to feel whether they were made of good wool. Then he gave a little laugh and said, “Mind neither mouse nor moth corrupts them, Stichus; otherwise I will burn you alive. I want to be carried out in splendour, so that the whole crowd calls down blessings on me.” He immediately opened a flask<sup>68</sup> and anointed us all and said, “I hope I shall like this as well in the grave as I do on earth.” Besides this he ordered wine to be poured into a bowl, and said, “Now you must imagine you have been asked to my funeral.”

65. the city in Asia from which he came.

66. a district on the southeast coast of Italy.

67. His name marks him as a member of an aristocratic Roman family.

68. of nard, an expensive ointment which has been bought in advance for use at his funeral.

The thing was becoming perfectly sickening, when Trimalchio, now deep in the most vile drunkenness, had a new set of performers, some trumpeters, brought into the dining-room, propped himself on a heap of cushions, and stretched himself on his death-bed, saying, "Imagine that I am dead. Play something pretty." The trumpeters broke into a loud funeral march. One man especially, a slave of the undertaker who was the most decent man in the party, blew such a mighty blast that the whole neighborhood was roused. The watch,<sup>69</sup> who were patrolling the streets close by, thought Trimalchio's house was alight, and suddenly burst in the door and began with water and axes to do their duty in creating a disturbance. My friends and I seized this most welcome opportunity, outwitted Agamemnon, and took to our heels as quickly as if there were a real fire.

69. municipal police or fire brigade.

## ST. AUGUSTINE

(354-430 A.D.)

### Confessions (Confessiones)\*

#### Book I

. . . I know not whence I came into this ~~dying~~ life (shall I call it?) or living death. Then immediately did the comforts of Thy compassion take me up, as I heard (for I remember it not) from the parents of my flesh, out of whose substance Thou didst sometime fashion me. Thus there received me the comforts of woman's milk. For neither my mother nor my nurses stored their own breasts for me; but Thou didst bestow the food of my infancy through them, according to Thine ordinance, whereby Thou distributest Thy riches through the hidden springs of all things. Thou also gavest me to desire no more than Thou gavest; and to my nurses willingly to give me what Thou gavest them. For they, with an heaven-taught affection, willingly gave me, what they abounded with from Thee. For this my good from them, was good for them. Nor, indeed, from them was it, but through them; for from Thee, O God, are all good things, and *from my God is all my health*. This I since learned, Thou, through these Thy gifts, within me and without, proclaiming Thyself unto me. For then I knew but to suck; to repose in what pleased, and cry at what offended my flesh; nothing more.

Afterwards I began to smile; first in sleep, then waking: for so it was told me of myself, and I believed it; for we see the like in other

\* Abridged. Written in 397 A.D. Translated by Edward B. Pusey.

infants, though of myself I remember it not. Thus, little by little, I became conscious where I was; and to have a wish to express my wishes to those who could content them, and I could not; for the wishes were within me, and they without; nor could they by any sense of theirs enter within my spirit. So I flung about at random limbs and voice, making the few signs I could, and such as I could, like, though in truth very little like, what I wished. And when I was not obeyed, (my wishes being hurtful or unintelligible,) then I was indignant with my elders for not submitting to me, with those owing me no service, for not serving me; and avenged myself on them by tears. Such have I learnt infants to be from observing them; and, that I was myself such, they, all unconscious, have shewn me better than my nurses who knew it.

. . . I came to boyhood, or rather it came to me, displacing infancy. Nor did that depart,—(for whither went it?)—and yet it was no more. For I was no longer a speechless infant, but a speaking boy. This I remember; and have since observed how I learned to speak. It was not that my elders taught me words (as, soon after, other learning) in any set method; but I, longing by cries and broken accents and various motions of my limbs to express my thoughts, that so I might have my will, and yet unable to express all I willed, or to whom I willed, did myself, by the understanding which Thou, my God, gavest me, practise the sounds in my memory. When they named any thing, and as they spoke turned towards it, I saw and remembered that they called what they would point out, by the name they uttered. And that they meant this thing and no other, was plain from the motion of their body, the natural language, as it were, of all nations, expressed by the countenance, glances of the eye, gestures of the limbs, and tones of the voice, indicating the affections of the mind, as it pursues, possesses, rejects, or shuns. And thus by constantly hearing words, as they occurred in various sentences, I realized gradually for what they stood; and having broken in my mouth to these signs, I thereby gave utterance to my will. Thus I exchanged with those about me these current signs of our wills, and so launched deeper into the stormy intercourse of human life, yet depending on parental authority and the beck of elders.

O God my God, what miseries and mockeries did I now experience, when obedience to my teachers was proposed to me, as proper in a boy, in order that in this world I might prosper, and excel in tongue-science,<sup>1</sup> which should serve to the praise of men, and to deceitful riches. Next I was put to school to get learning, in which I (poor wretch) knew not what use there was; and yet, if

1. the study of rhetoric, which was the passport to eminence in public life.

idle in learning, I was beaten. For this was judged right by our forefathers; and many, passing the same course before us, framed for us weary paths, through which we were fain to pass; multiplying toil and grief upon the sons of Adam. But, Lord, we found that men called upon Thee, and we learnt from them to think of Thee (according to our powers) as of some great One, who, though hidden from our senses, couldst hear and help us. For so I began, as a boy, to pray to Thee, my aid and refuge; and broke the fetters of my tongue to call on Thee, praying Thee, though small, yet with no small earnestness, that I might not be beaten at school. And when Thou heardest me not, (*not thereby giving me over to folly,*<sup>2</sup>) my elders, yea, my very parents, who yet wished me no ill, mocked my stripes, my then great and grievous ill.

Is there, Lord, any of soul so great, and cleaving to Thee with so intense affection, (for a sort of stupidity will in a way do it); but is there any one, who, from cleaving devoutly to Thee, is endued with so great a spirit, that he can think as lightly of the racks and hooks and other torments,<sup>3</sup> (against which, throughout all lands, men call on Thee with extreme dread,) mocking at those by whom they are feared most bitterly, as our parents mocked the torments which we suffered in boyhood from our masters? For we feared not our torments less; nor prayed we less to Thee to escape them. And yet we sinned, in writing or reading or studying less than was exacted of us. For we wanted not, O Lord, memory or capacity, whereof Thy will gave enough for our age; but our sole delight was play; and for this we were punished by those who yet themselves were doing the like. But elder folks' idleness is called "business"; that of boys, being really the same, is punished by those elders; and none commiserates either boys or men. For will any of sound discretion approve of my being beaten as a boy, because, by playing at ball, I made less progress in studies which I was to learn, only that, as a man, I might play more unbecomingly? And what else did he, who beat me? who, if worsted in some trifling discussion with his fellow-teachers, was more embittered and jealous than I, when beaten at ball by a play-fellow? . . .

In boyhood itself, however, (so much less dreaded for me than youth,) I loved not study, and hated to be forced to it. Yet I was forced; and this was well done towards me, but I did not well; for, unless forced, I had not learnt. But no one doeth well against his will, even though what he doth, be well. Yet neither did they well

2. Augustine recognizes the necessity of this rigorous training; that he never forgot its harshness is clear from his remark in the *City of God*, Book XXI, Section 14: "If a choice were given him between suffering death and living

his early years over again, who would not shudder and choose death?"

3. *racks and hooks and other torments*: the instruments of public execution.

who forced me, but what was well came to me from Thee, my God. For they were regardless how I should employ what they forced me to learn, except to satiate the insatiate desires of a wealthy beggary, and a shameful glory. But Thou, *by whom the very hairs of our head are numbered*, didst use for my good the error of all who urged me to learn; and my own, who would not learn, Thou didst use for my punishment—a fit penalty for one, so small a boy and so great a sinner. So by those who did not well, Thou didst well for me; and by my own sin Thou didst justly punish me. For Thou hast commanded, and so it is, that every inordinate affection should be its own punishment.

But why did I so much hate the Greek,<sup>4</sup> which I studied as a boy? I do not yet fully know. For the Latin I loved; not what my first masters, but what the so-called grammarians<sup>5</sup> taught me. For those first lessons, reading, writing, and arithmetic, I thought as great a burden and penalty as any Greek. And yet whence was this too, but from the sin and vanity of this life, because *I was flesh, and a breath that passeth away and cometh not again?* For those first lessons were better certainly, because more certain; by them I obtained, and still retain, the power of reading what I find written, and myself writing what I will; whereas in the others, I was forced to learn the wanderings of one Aeneas,<sup>6</sup> forgetful of my own, and to weep for dead Dido, because she killed herself for love; the while, with dry eyes, I endured my miserable self dying among these things, far from Thee, O God my life.

For what more miserable than a miserable being who commiserates not himself; weeping the death of Dido<sup>7</sup> for love to Aeneas, but weeping not his own death for want of love to Thee, O God. Thou light of my heart, Thou bread of my inmost soul, Thou Power who givest vigour to my mind, who quickenest my thoughts, I loved Thee not. I committed fornication<sup>8</sup> against Thee, and all around me thus fornicating there echoed "Well done! well done!" *for the friendship of this world is fornication against Thee*; and "Well done! well done!" echoes on till one is ashamed not to be thus a man. And all this I wept not, I who wept for Dido slain, and "seeking by the sword a stroke and wound extreme,"<sup>9</sup> myself seeking the while a worse extreme, the extremest and lowest of Thy creatures, having forsaken Thee, earth passing into the earth. And if forbid to read all this, I was grieved that I might not read what grieved me.

4. important not only for gaining knowledge of Greek literature but also because it was the official language of the Eastern half of the Roman Empire. Augustine never really mastered Greek, though his remark elsewhere that he had acquired so little Greek that it amounted to practically none, is overmodest.

5. the teachers in the grammar school (see below), who taught the students how to read the poets, historians, and orators, and exercised them in textual and literary criticism.

6. the third book of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

7. See Book IV of the *Aeneid*.

8. metaphorically in this instance.

9. See the *Aeneid*, Book VI, l. 457.



Madness like this is thought a higher and a richer learning, than that by which I learned to read and write.

But now, my God, cry Thou aloud in my soul; and let Thy truth tell me, "Not so, not so. Far better was that first study." For, lo, I would readily forget the wanderings of Aeneas and all the rest, rather than how to read and write. But over the entrance of the Grammar School is a curtain<sup>10</sup> drawn! true; yet is this not so much an emblem of anything recondite, as a cloak of error. Let not those, whom I no longer fear, cry out against me, while I confess to Thee, my God, whatever my soul will, and acquiesce in the condemnation of my evil ways, that I may love Thy good ways. Let not either buyers or sellers of grammar-learning cry out against me. For if I question them whether it be true, that Aeneas came on a time to Carthage, as the Poet tells, the less learned will reply that they know not, the more learned that he never did.<sup>11</sup> But should I ask with what letters the name "Aeneas" is written, every one who has learnt this will answer me aright, as to the signs which men have conventionally settled. If, again, I should ask, which might be forgotten with least detriment to the concerns of life, reading and writing or these poetic fictions? who does not foresee, what all must answer who have not wholly forgotten themselves? I sinned, then, when as a boy I preferred those empty to those more profitable studies, or rather loved the one and hated the other. "One and one, two;" "two and two, four;" this was to me a hateful sing-song: the wooden horse lined with armed men, and the burning of Troy, and "Creusa's shade and sad similitude,"<sup>12</sup> were the choice spectacle of my vanity. . . .

Bear with me, my God, while I say something of my wit, Thy gift, and on what dotages I wasted it. For a task was set me, troublesome enough to my soul, upon terms of praise or shame, and fear of blows, to speak the words of Juno,<sup>13</sup> as she raged and mourned that she could not

This Trojan prince from Latium turn.

Which words I had heard that Juno never uttered; but we were forced to go astray in the footsteps of these poetic fictions, and to say in prose the sort of thing which he expressed in verse. And his speaking was most applauded, in whom the passions of rage and

10. School was often held in a building open on one side and curtained off from the street.

11. Augustine's point is that the historical truth of the poet's story may be doubted, but the spelling of Aeneas' name is certain.

12. *Aeneid*, Book II, l. 772.

13. Augustine was assigned the task of delivering a prose paraphrase of

Juno's angry speech in the *Aeneid*, Book I. (She complains that her enemies, the Trojans under Aeneas, are on their way to their destined goal in Italy in spite of her resolution to prevent them.) Rhetorical exercises such as this were common in the schools, since they served the double purpose of teaching literature and rhetorical composition at the same time.

grief were most pre-eminent, and clothed in the most fitting language, maintaining the dignity of the character. What is it to me, O my true life, my God, that my declamation was applauded above so many of my own age and class? Is not all this smoke and wind? And was there nothing else whereon to exercise my wit and tongue? Thy praises, Lord, Thy praises might have stayed the yet tender shoot of my heart by the prop of Thy Scriptures; so had it not trailed away amid these empty trifles, a defiled prey for the fowls of the air. For in more ways than one do men sacrifice to the rebellious angels. . . .

### Book II

I will now call to mind my past foulness, and the carnal corruptions of my soul: not because I love them, but that I may love Thee, O my God. For love of Thy love I do it; reviewing my most wicked ways in the very bitterness of my remembrance, that Thou mayest grow sweet unto me; (Thou sweetness never failing, Thou blissful and assured sweetness;) and gathering me again out of that my dissipation, wherein I was torn piecemeal, while turned from Thee, the One Good, I lost myself among a multiplicity of things. For I even burnt in my youth heretofore, to be satiated in things below; and I dared to grow wild again, with these various and shadowy loves: *my beauty consumed away*, and I stank in Thine eyes; pleasing myself, and desirous to please in the eyes of men.

And what was it that I delighted in, but to love, and be beloved? but I kept not the measure of love, of mind to mind, friendship's bright boundary; but out of the muddy concupiscence of the flesh, and the bubblings of youth, mists fumed up which beclouded and overcast my heart, that I could not discern the clear brightness of love, from the fog of lustfulness. Both did confusedly boil in me, and hurried my unstayed youth over the precipice of unholy desires, and sunk me in a gulf of flagitiousnesses. Thy wrath had gathered over me, and I knew it not. I was grown deaf by the clanking of the chain of my mortality, the punishment of the pride of my soul, and I strayed further from Thee, and Thou lettest me alone, and I was tossed about, and wasted, and dissipated, and I boiled over in my fornications, and Thou heldest Thy peace, O Thou my tardy joy! Thou then heldest Thy peace, and I wandered further and further from Thee, into more and more fruitless seed-plots of sorrows, with a proud dejectedness, and a restless weariness. . . .

Where was I, and how far was I exiled from the delights of Thy house in that sixteenth year of the age of my flesh, when the madness of lust (to which human shamelessness giveth free license, though unlicensed by Thy laws) took the rule over me, and I re-

signed myself wholly to it? My friends meanwhile took no care by marriage to save my fall; their only care was that I should learn to speak excellently, and be a persuasive orator. . . .

Theft is punished by Thy law, O Lord, and the law written in the hearts of men, which iniquity itself effaces not. For what thief will abide a thief? not even a rich thief, one stealing through want. Yet I lusted to thieve, and did it, compelled by no poverty except want of righteousness and indeed contempt for it, and an overabundance of wickedness. For I stole that, of which I had enough, and much better. Nor cared I to enjoy what I stole, but joyed in the theft and sin itself. A pear tree there was near our vineyard, laden with fruit, tempting neither for colour nor taste. To shake and rob this, some wild young fellows of us went, late one night, (having according to our pestilent custom prolonged our sports in the streets till then,) and took huge loads, not for our eating, but to fling to the very hogs, having only tasted them. And this, but to do, what we liked only, because it was disliked. Behold my heart, O God, behold my heart, which Thou hadst pity upon in the bottom of the bottomless pit. Now, behold let my heart tell Thee, what it sought there, that I should be gratuitously evil, having no temptation to ill, but the ill itself. It was foul, and I loved it; I loved to perish, I loved mine own fault, not that for which I was faulty, but my fault itself. Foul soul, falling from Thy firmament to utter destruction; not seeking aught through the shame but the shame itself! . . .

### Book III

To Carthage<sup>1</sup> I came, where there sang all around me in my ears a cauldron of unholy loves. I loved not yet, yet I loved to love, and out of a deep-seated want, I hated myself for wanting not. I sought what I might love, in love with loving, and safety I hated, and a way without snares. For within me was a famine of that inward food, Thyself, my God; yet, through that famine I was not hungered; but was without all longing for incorruptible sustenance, not because filled therewith, but the more empty, the more I loathed it. For this cause my soul was sickly and full of sores, it miserably cast itself forth, desiring to be scraped by the touch of objects of sense. Yet if these had not a soul, they would not be objects of love. To love them, and to be beloved, was sweet to me; but more, when I obtained to enjoy the person I loved. I defiled, therefore, the spring of friendship with the filth of concupiscence, and I beclouded its brightness with the hell of lustfulness; and thus foul and unseemly, I would fain, through exceeding vanity, be fine and courtly. I fell headlong then into the love, wherein I longed to be ensnared. My

1. the capital city of the province, where Augustine went to study rhetoric.

God, my Mercy, with how much gall didst thou out of thy great goodness besprinkle for me that sweetness? For I was both beloved, and secretly arrived at the bond of enjoying; and was with joy fettered with sorrow-bringing bonds, that I might be scourged with the iron burning rods of jealousy, and suspicions, and fears, and angers, and quarrels.

Stage-plays also carried me away, full of images of my miseries, and of fuel to my fire. Why is it, that man desires to be made sad, beholding dolcful and tragical things, which yet himself would by no means suffer? yet he desires as a spectator to feel sorrow at them, and this very sorrow is his pleasure. What is this but a miserable madness? for a man is the more affected with these actions, the less free he is from such affections. Howsoever, when he suffers in his own person, it is usually called misery: when he compassionates others, then it is mercy. But what sort of compassion is this for feigned and scenical passions? for the auditor is not called on to relieve, but only to grieve: and he applauds the actor of these fictions the more, the more he grieves. And if the calamities of those persons (whether of old times, or mere fiction) be so acted, that the spectator is not moved to tears, he goes away disgusted and criticising; but if he be moved to passion, he stays intent, and weeps for joy. . . .

Those studics<sup>2</sup> also, which were accounted commendable, had a view to excelling in the courts of litigation; the more bepraised, the craftier. Such is men's blindness, glorying even in their blindness. And now I was chief<sup>3</sup> in the rhetoric school, wheremat I joyed proudly, and I swelled with arrogancy, though (Lord, Thou knowest) far quieter and altogether removed from the subvertings of those "Subverters"<sup>4</sup> (for this ill-omened and devilish name, was the very badge of gallantry) among whom I lived, with a shameless shame that I was not even as they. With them I lived, and was sometimes delighted with their friendship, whose doings I ever did abhor, i.e. their "subvertings," wherewith they wantonly persecuted the modesty of strangers, which they disturbed by a gratuitous jeering, feeding thercon their malicious mirth. Nothing can be liker the very actions of devils than these. What then could they be more truly called than "subverters?" themselves subverted and altogether perverted first, the deceiving spirits secretly deriding and seducing them, wherein themselves delight to jeer at, and deceive others.

Among such as these, in that unsettled age of mine, learned I books of eloquence, wherein I desired to be eminent, out of a damnable and vain glorious end, a joy in human vanity. In the ordinary course of study, I fell upon a certain book of Cicero, whose

2. rhetorical studies.

3. the best student.

4. a group of students who prided themselves on their wild actions and indiscipline.

speech<sup>5</sup> almost all admire, not so his heart. This book of his contains an exhortation to philosophy, and is called "*Hortensius*."<sup>6</sup> But this book altered my affections, and turned my prayers to Thyself, O Lord; and made me have other purposes and desires. Every vain hope at once became worthless to me; and I longed with an incredibly burning desire for an immortality of wisdom, and began now to arise, that I might return to Thee. For not to sharpen my tongue, (which thing I seemed to be purchasing with my mother's allowances, in that my nineteenth year, my father being dead two years before,) not to sharpen my tongue did I employ that book; nor did it infuse into me its style, but its matter. . . .

I resolved then to bend my mind to the holy Scriptures, that I might see what they were. But behold, I see a thing not understood by the proud, nor laid open to children, lowly in access, in its recesses lofty, and veiled with mysteries; and I was not such as could enter into it, or stoop my neck to follow its steps. For not as I now speak, did I feel when I turned to those Scriptures; but they seemed to me unworthy to be compared to the stateliness of Cicero, for my swelling pride shrunk from their lowliness, nor could my sharp wit pierce the interior thereof. Yet were they such as would grow up in a little one. But I disdained to be a little one; and, swoln with pride, took myself to be a great one.

[At Carthage, Augustine was converted to the doctrines of the Manichees, a sect of which he remained a member for the next nine years. The founder of this religion was the Babylonian Mani (or Manes), who was crucified in the third century A.D. His doctrines consisted of an amalgam of various beliefs (some borrowed from Christianity), out of which his followers constructed a complicated and somewhat contradictory system. Its most important feature was the stress laid on Evil as an independent power, engaged in a struggle with the power of Good. This conception had the effect of relieving the individual of any feeling of responsibility for his evil actions—they were manifestations of an outside power working in him. The members of the sect were divided into two classes, the Elect and the Hearers; the Elect were forbidden to eat meat. The Manichees were exceedingly powerful in the fourth century, and they remained a serious obstacle to the progress of Christianity for many years afterward.]

#### Book IV

For this space of nine years then (from my nineteenth year, to my eight and twentieth) we lived seduced and seducing, deceived

5. style.

6. Only fragments of this dialogue remain. In it Cicero replies to an op-

ponent of philosophy with an impassioned defense of the intellectual life.

and deceiving, in divers lusts; openly, by sciences which they call liberal;<sup>1</sup> secretly, with a false named religion; here proud, there superstitious, every where vain! Here, hunting after the emptiness of popular praise, down even to theatrical applauses,<sup>2</sup> and poetic prizes, and strifes for grassy garlands,<sup>3</sup> and the follies of shows, and the intemperance of desires. There, desiring to be cleansed from these defilements, by carrying food to those who were called "elect" and "holy," out of which, in the workhouse of their stomachs, they should forge for us Angels and Gods, by whom we might be cleansed.<sup>4</sup> These things did I follow, and practise with my friends, deceived by me, and with me. . . .

In those years I taught rhetoric, and, overcome by cupidity, made sale of loquacity to overcome by. Yet I preferred (Lord, Thou knowest) honest scholars, (as they are accounted,) and these I, without artifice, taught artifices, not to be practised against the life of the guiltless, though sometimes for the life of the guilty. And Thou, O God, from afar perceivedst me stumbling in that slippery course, and amid much smoke sending out some sparks of faithfulness, which I shewed in that my guidance of *such as loved vanity*, and *sought after lying*, myself their companion. In those years I had one,—not in that which is called lawful marriage, but whom I had found out in a wayward passion, void of understanding; yet but one, remaining faithful even to her; in whom I in my own case experienced, what difference there is betwixt the self-restraint of the marriage-covenant, for the sake of issue, and the bargain of a lustful love, where children are born against their parents' will, although, once born,<sup>5</sup> they constrain love. . . .

In those years when I first began to teach rhetoric in my native town, I had made one my friend, but too dear to me, from a community of pursuits, of mine own age, and, as myself, in the first opening flower of youth. He had grown up of a child with me, and we had been both school-fellows, and play-fellows. But he was not yet my friend as afterwards, nor even then, as true friendship is; for true it cannot be, unless in such as Thou cementest together, cleaving unto Thee, by that *love which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us*. Yet was it but too sweet, ripened by the warmth of kindred studies: for, from the true faith (which he as a youth had not soundly and thoroughly imbibed,) I had warped him also to those superstitious and pernicious fables, for

1. the rhetorical and literary studies which Augustine pursued.

2. at rhetorical contests held in the theater.

3. the prize for the winner of the contest.

4. Certain vegetables were supposed

to contain elements of Light, which were liberated when the vegetables were eaten by the Elect.

5. The liaison referred to in this passage resulted in the birth of a son, Adeodatus, who later accompanied Augustine to Italy.

which my mother<sup>6</sup> bewailed me. With me he now erred in mind, nor could my soul be without him. But behold Thou wert close on the steps of Thy fugitives, at once *God of vengeance*, and Fountain of mercies, turning us to Thyself by wonderful means; Thou tookest that man out of this life, when he had scarce filled up one whole year of my friendship, sweet to me above all sweetness of that my life.

*Who can recount all Thy praises*, which he hath felt in his one self? What diddest Thou then, my God, and how unsearchable is the *abyss of Thy judgments*? For long, sore sick of a fever, he lay senseless in a death-sweat; and his recovery being despaired of, he was baptized,<sup>7</sup> unknowing; myself meanwhile little regarding, and presuming that his soul would retain rather what it had received of me, not what was wrought on his unconscious body. But it proved far otherwise: for he was refreshed, and restored. Forthwith, as soon as I could speak with him, (and I could, so soon as he was able, for I never left him, and we hung but too much upon each other,) I essayed to jest with him, as though he would jest with me at that baptism which he had received, when utterly absent in mind and feeling, but had now understood that he had received. But he so shrunk from me, as from an enemy; and with a wonderful and sudden freedom bade me, as I would continue his friend, forbear such language to him. I, all astonished and amazed, suppressed all my emotions till he should grow well, and his health were strong enough for me to deal with him, as I would. But he was taken away from my phrensy, that with Thee he might be preserved for my comfort; a few days after, in my absence, he was attacked again by the fever, and so departed.

At this grief my heart was utterly darkened; and whatever I beheld was death. My native country was a torment to me, and my father's house a strange unhappiness; and whatever I had shared with him, wanting him, became a distracting torture. Mine eyes sought him every where, but he was not granted them; and I hated all places, for that they had not him; nor could they now tell me, "he is coming," as when he was alive and absent. I became a great riddle to myself, and I asked my soul, *why she was so sad, and why she disquieted me sorely*: but she knew not what to answer me. And if I said, *Trust in God*, she very rightly obeyed me not; because that most dear friend, whom she had lost, was, being man, both truer and better, than that phantasm she was bid to trust in. Only tears were sweet to me, for they succeeded my friend, in the dearest of my affections. . . .

6. Augustine's mother, Monica, was a Christian, and lamented her son's Manichaean beliefs.

7. as a Christian; the Manichees did not use this rite.

## Book V

. . . Thou didst deal with me, that I should be persuaded to go to Rome, and to teach there rather, what I was teaching at Carthage. And how I was persuaded to this, I will not neglect to confess to Thee: because herein also the deepest recesses of Thy wisdom and Thy most present mercy to us, must be considered and confessed. I did not wish therefore to go to Rome, because higher gains and higher dignities were warranted me by my friends who persuaded me to this, (though even these things had at that time an influence over my mind,) but my chief and almost only reason was, that I heard that young men studied there more peacefully, and were kept quiet under a restraint of more regular discipline; so that they did not, at their pleasures, petulantly rush into the school of one, whose pupils they were not, nor were even admitted without his permission. Whereas at Carthage, there reigns among the scholars a most disgraceful and unruly licence. They burst in audaciously, and with gestures almost frantic, disturb all order which any one hath established for the good of his scholars. Divers outrages they commit, with a wonderful stolidity, punishable by law, did not custom uphold them; that custom shewing them to be the more miserable, in that they now do as lawful, what by Thy eternal law shall never be lawful; and they think they do it unpunished, whereas they are punished with the very blindness whereby they do it, and suffer incomparably worse than what they do. The manners then which, when a student, I would not make my own, I was fain, as a teacher, to endure in others: and so I was well pleased to go where, all that knew it, assured me that the like was not done. But Thou, *my refuge and my portion in the land of the living*, that I might change my earthly dwelling for the salvation of my soul, at Carthage didst goad me, that I might thereby be torn from it; and at Rome didst proffer me allurments, whereby I might be drawn thither, by men in love with a dying life, the one doing frantic, the other promising vain, things; and, to correct my steps, didst secretly use their and my own perverseness. For both they who disturbed my quiet, were blinded with a disgraceful phrenzy, and they who invited me elsewhere, savoured of earth. And I, who here detested real misery, was there seeking unreal happiness.

But why I went hence, and went thither, Thou knewest, O God, yet shewedst it neither to me, nor to my mother, who grievously bewailed my journey, and followed me as far as the sea. But I deceived her, holding me by force, that either she might keep me back, or go with me, and I feigned that I had a friend whom I could not leave, till he had a fair wind to sail. And I lied to my mother, and such a mother, and escaped: for this also hast Thou



mercifully forgiven me, preserving me, thus full of execrable defilements, from the waters of the sea, for the water of Thy Grace; whereby when I was cleansed, the streams of my mother's eyes should be dried, with which for me she daily watered the ground under her face. And yet refusing to return without me, I scarcely persuaded her to stay that night in a place hard by our ship, where was an Oratory<sup>1</sup> in memory of the blessed Cyprian.<sup>2</sup> That night I privily departed, but she was not behind in weeping and prayer. And what, O Lord, was she with so many tears asking of Thee, but that Thou wouldest not suffer me to sail? But Thou, in the depth of Thy counsels and hearing the main point of her desire, regardest not what she then asked, that Thou mightest make me what she ever asked. The wind blew and swelled our sails, and withdrew the shore from our sight; and she on the morrow was there, frantic with sorrow, and with complaints and groans filled Thine ears, who didst then disregard them; whilst through my desires, Thou wert hurrying me to end all desire, and the earthly part of her affection to me was chastened by the allotted scourge of sorrows. For she loved my being with her, as mothers do, but much more than many; and she knew not how great joy Thou wert about to work for her out of my absence. She knew not; therefore did she weep and wail, and by this agony there appeared in her the inheritance of Eve, with sorrow seeking, what in sorrow she had brought forth. And yet, after accusing my treachery and hardheartedness, she betook herself again to intercede to Thee for me, went to her wonted place, and I to Rome. . . .

But now despairing to make proficiency in that false doctrine,<sup>3</sup> even those things (with which if I should find no better, I had resolved to rest contented) I now held more laxly and carelessly. For there half arose a thought in me, that those philosophers, whom they call Academics,<sup>4</sup> were wiser than the rest, for that they held, men ought to doubt every thing, and laid down that no truth can be comprehended by man: for so, not then understanding even their meaning, I also was clearly convinced that they thought, as they are commonly reported.<sup>5</sup> Yet did I freely and openly discourage that host<sup>6</sup> of mine from that over-confidence which I perceived him to have in those fables, which the books of Manichæus are full of. Yet I lived in more familiar friendship with them, than with others who were not of this heresy. Nor did I maintain it with my ancient

1. chapel.

2. bishop of Carthage, beheaded during a persecution of the Christians in 258 A.D.

3. the doctrine of the Manichees.

4. members of a Greek philosophical school which questioned the validity of all belief. Augustine probably became acquainted with their position through

Cicero's work on the subject.

5. Augustine then thought the Academic position more simple than it was; it is still a matter of controversy how far they carried their skeptical attitude.

6. The man in whose house Augustine was living was a member of the Manichæan community in Rome.

eagerness; still my intimacy with that sect (Rome secretly harbouring many of them) made me slower to seek any other way: especially since I despaired of finding the truth, from which they had turned me aside, in Thy Church, O Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of all things visible and invisible. . . .

I began then diligently to practise that for which I came to Rome, to teach rhetoric; and first, to gather some to my house, to whom, and through whom, I had begun to be known; when lo, I found other offences committed in Rome, to which I was not exposed in Africa. True, those "subvertings" by profligate young men, were not here practised, as was told me: but on a sudden, said they, to avoid paying their master's stipend, a number of youths plot together, and remove to another;—breakers of faith, who for love of money hold justice cheap. . . .

When therefore they of Milan<sup>7</sup> had sent to Rome to the prefect of the city, to furnish them with a rhetoric reader for their city, and send him at the public expense, I made application (through those very persons, intoxicated with Manichæan vanities, to be freed I was to go, neither of us however knowing it) that Symmachus, then prefect of the city, would try me by setting me some subject,<sup>8</sup> and so send me. To Milan I came, to Ambrose<sup>9</sup> the Bishop, known to the whole world as among the best of men, Thy devout servant; whose eloquent discourse did then plentifully dispense unto Thy people the flour of Thy wheat, the gladness of Thy oil, and the sober inebriation of Thy wine. To him was I unknowingly led by Thee, that by him I might knowingly be led to Thee. That man of God received me as a father, and shewed me an Episcopal kindness<sup>10</sup> on my coming. Thenceforth I began to love him, at first indeed not as a teacher of the truth, (which I utterly despaired of in Thy Church,) but as a person kind towards myself. And I listened diligently to him preaching to the people, not with that intent I ought, but, as it were, trying his eloquence, whether it answered the fame thereof, or flowed fuller or lower than was reported; and I hung on his words attentively; but of the matter I was as a careless and scornful looker-on; and I was delighted with the sweetness of his discourse, more recondite, yet in manner, less winning and harmonious, than that of Faustus. Of the matter, however, there was no comparison; for the one was wandering

7. a city in the north of Italy, which because it was nearer to the frontiers was growing in importance and was soon to replace Rome as the capital, in practice, of the Western Empire.

8. on which to deliver an exhibition speech.

9. the leading personality among the Christians of the West. Not many years after this he defied the power of the

emperor Theodosius, and forced him to beg for God's pardon in the church at Milan for having put the inhabitants of Thessalonica to the sword.

10. In the First Epistle to Timothy, Paul lists the qualifications of a bishop; he must, among other things, be "given to hospitality, apt to teach." (1 Timothy 3:2.)

amid Manichæan delusions, the other teaching salvation most soundly. But *salvation is far from sinners*, such as I then stood before him; and yet was I drawing nearer by little and little, and unconsciously.

For though I took no pains to learn what he spake, but only to hear how he spake; (for that empty care alone was left me, despairing of a way open for man, to Thcc,) yet together with the words which I would choose, came also into my mind the things which I would refuse; for I could not separate them. And while I opened my heart to admit "how eloquently he spake," there also entered "how truly he spake;" but this by degrees. For first, these things also had now begun to appear to me capable of defence; and the Catholic faith, for which I had thought nothing could be said against the Manichees' objections, I now thought might be maintained without shamelessness; especially after I had heard one or two places of the Old Testament resolved, and oftentimes "*in a figure*,"<sup>11</sup> which when I understood literally, I was slain spiritually. Very many places then of those books having been explained, I now blamed my despair, in believing, that no answer could be given to such as hated and scoffed at the Law and the Prophets. Yet did I not therefore then see, that the Catholic way was to be held, because it also could find learned maintainers, who could at large and with some shew of reason answer objections; nor that what I held was therefore to be condemned, because both sides could be maintained. For the Catholic cause seemed to me in such sort not vanquished, as still not as yet to be victorious.

Hercupon I earnestly bent my mind, to see if in any way I could by any certain proof convict the Manichees of falsehood. Could I once have conceived a spiritual substance,<sup>12</sup> all their strong holds had been beaten down, and cast utterly out of my mind; but I could not. Notwithstanding, concerning the frame of this world, and the whole of nature, which the senses of the flesh can reach to, as I more and more considered and compared things, I judged the tenets of most of the philosophers to have been much more probable. So then after the manner of the Academics (as they are supposed) doubting of every thing, and wavering between all, I settled so far, that the Manichees were to be abandoned; judging that, even while doubting, I might not continue in that sect, to which I already preferred some of the philosophers; to which philosophers notwithstanding, for that they were without the saving Name of Christ, I utterly refused to commit the cure of my sick soul. I determined

11. Ambrose was famous for his allegorical explanations of difficult passages in the Scriptures.

12. One of the Manichæan criticisms of Christian doctrine which Augustine

so far found impossible to answer was their objection to the concept of an infinite god who took on a corporeal nature.

therefore so long to be a Catechumen<sup>13</sup> in the Catholic Church, to which I had been commended by my parents, till something certain should dawn upon me, whither I might steer my course.

### Book VI

. . . My mother had now come to me, resolute through piety, following me over sea and land, in all perils confiding in Thee. For in perils of the sea, she comforted the very mariners, (by whom passengers unacquainted with the deep, use rather to be comforted when troubled,) assuring them of a safe arrival, because Thou hadst by a vision assured her thereof. She found me in grievous peril, through despair of ever finding truth. But when I had discovered to her, that I was now no longer a Manichee, though not yet a Catholic Christian, she was not overjoyed, as at something unexpected; although she was now assured concerning that part of my misery, for which she bewailed me as one dead. . . .

Nor did I yet groan in my prayers, that Thou wouldest help me; but my spirit was wholly intent on learning, and restless to dispute. And Ambrose himself, as the world counts happy, I esteemed a happy man, whom personages so great held in such honour; only his celibacy seemed to me a painful course. But what hope he bore within him, what struggles he had against the temptations which beset his very excellencies, or what comfort in adversities, and what sweet joys Thy Bread had for the hidden mouth of his spirit, when chewing the cud thereof, I neither could conjecture, nor had experienced. Nor did he know the tides of my feelings, or the abyss of my danger. For I could not ask of him, what I would as I would, being shut out both from his ear and speech by multitudes of busy people, whose weaknesses he served. With whom when he was not taken up, (which was but a little time,) he was either refreshing his body with the sustenance absolutely necessary, or his mind with reading. But when he was reading, his eye glided over the pages, and his heart searched out the sense, but his voice and tongue were at rest. Oft-times when we had come, (for no man was forbidden to enter, nor was it his wont that any who came should be announced to him,) we saw him thus reading to himself, and never otherwise; and having long sat silent, (for who durst intrude on one so intent?) we were fain to depart, conjecturing, that in the small interval, which he obtained, free from the din of others' business, for the recruiting of his mind, he was loath to be taken off; and perchance he dreaded lest if the author he read should deliver any thing obscurely, some attentive or perplexed hearer should desire him to expound it, or to discuss some of the

13. one who is preparing himself for baptism.

harder questions; so that his time being thus spent, he could not turn over so many volumes as he desired; although the preserving of his voice (which a very little speaking would weaken) might be the truer reason for his reading to himself. But with what intent soever he did it, certainly in such a man it was good. . . .

I panted after honours, gains, marriage; and Thou deridest me. In these desires I underwent most bitter crosses, Thou being the more gracious, the less Thou sufferedst aught to grow sweet to me, which was not Thou. Behold my heart, O Lord, who wouldest I should remember all this, and confess to Thee. Let my soul cleave unto Thee, now that Thou hast freed it from that fast-holding bird-lime of death. How wretched was it! and Thou didst irritate the feeling of its wound, that forsaking all else, it might be converted unto Thee, who art above all, and without whom all things would be nothing; be converted, and be healed. How miserable was I then, and how didst Thou deal with me, to make me feel my misery on that day, when I was preparing to recite a panegyric of the Emperor,<sup>1</sup> wherein I was to utter many a lie, and lying, was to be applauded by those who knew I lied, and my heart was panting with these anxieties, and boiling with the feverishness of consuming thoughts. For, passing through one of the streets of Milan, I observed a poor beggar, then, I suppose, with a full belly, joking and joyous; and I sighed and spoke to the friends around me, of the many sorrows of our phrenzies; for that by all such efforts of ours, as those wherein I then toiled, dragging along, under the goading of desire, the burthen of my own wretchedness, and, by dragging, augmenting it, we yet looked to arrive only at that very joyousness, whither that beggar-man had arrived before us, who should never perchance attain it. For what he had obtained by means of a few begged pence, the same was I plotting for by many a toilsome turning and winding; the joy of a temporary felicity. For he verily had not the true joy; but yet I with those my ambitious designs was seeking one much less true. And certainly he was joyous, I anxious; he void of care, I full of fears. But should any ask me, had I rather be merry or fearful? I would answer, merry. Again, if he asked had I rather be such as he was, or what I then was? I should choose to be myself, though worn with cares and fears; but out of wrong judgement; for, was it the truth? For I ought not to prefer myself to him, because more learned than he, seeing I had no joy therein, but sought to please men by it; and that not to instruct, but simply to please. Wherefore also Thou didst break my bones with the staff of thy correction. . . .

Continual effort was made to have me married. I wooed, I was

1. probably the young Valentinian, whose court was at Milan.

promised, chiefly through my mother's pains, that so once married, the health-giving baptism might cleanse me,<sup>2</sup> towards which she rejoiced that I was being daily fitted, and observed that her prayers, and Thy promises, were being fulfilled in my faith. At which time verily, both at my request and her own longing, with strong cries of heart she daily begged of Thee, that Thou wouldest by a vision discover unto her something concerning my future marriage; Thou never wouldest. She saw indeed certain vain and phantastic things, such as the energy of the human spirit, busied thereon, brought together; and these she told me of, not with that confidence she was wont, when Thou shewedst her any thing, but slighting them. For she could, she said, through a certain feeling, which in words she could not express, discern betwixt Thy revelations and the dreams of her own soul. Yet the matter was pressed on, and a maiden asked in marriage, two years under the fit age;<sup>3</sup> and, as pleasing, was waited for.

And many of us friends conferring about, and detesting the turbulent turmoils of human life, had debated and now almost resolved on living apart from business and the bustle of men; and this was to be thus obtained; we were to bring whatever we might severally procure, and make one household of all; so that through the truth of our friendship nothing should belong especially to any; but the whole thus derived from all, should as a whole belong to each, and all to all. We thought there might be some ten persons in this society; some of whom were very rich, especially Romanianus our townsman, from childhood a very familiar friend of mine, whom the grievous perplexities of his affairs had brought up to court; who was the most earnest for this project; and therein was his voice of great weight, because his ample estate far exceeded any of the rest. We had settled also, that two annual officers, as it were, should provide all things necessary, the rest being undisturbed. But when we began to consider whether the wives, which some of us already had, others hoped to have, would allow this, all that plan, which was being so well moulded, fell to pieces in our hands, was utterly dashed and cast aside. Thence we betook us to sighs, and groans, and our steps to follow the *broad and beaten ways* of the world; for many thoughts were in our heart, *but Thy counsel standeth for ever*. Out of which counsel Thou didst deride ours, and preparedst Thine own; purposing to *give us meat in due season, and to open Thy hand, and to fill our souls with blessing*.

Meanwhile my sins were being multiplied, and my concubine being torn from my side as a hindrance to my marriage, my heart which clave unto her was torn and wounded and bleeding. And she

2. He could not be baptized while living in sin with his mistress.

3. The legal age was twelve years.

returned to Afric, vowing unto Thee never to know any other man, leaving with me my son by her. But unhappy I, who could not imitate a very woman, impatient of delay, inasmuch as not till after two years was I to obtain her I sought, not being so much a lover of marriage, as a slave to lust, procured another, though no wife, that so by the servitude of an enduring custom, the disease of my soul might be kept up and carried on in its vigor or even augmented, into the dominion of marriage. Nor was that my wound cured, which had been made by the cutting away of the former, but after inflammation and most acute pain, it mortified, and my pains became less acute, but more desperate. . . .

[Book VII is an account of the intellectual difficulties which still stood in the way of his full conversion to the Church, and of the solution of those difficulties to which he finally came. Augustine tells how he rejected astrology and accepted the concept of free will, but was still puzzled by the problem of evil. He finally realized that evil is not an independent entity, existing in opposition to God (as the Manichees taught), but something negative, the absence of good, "not a substance but a perversity of the will turned away to lower things from the highest substance." The resolution of his intellectual difficulties did not bring him the Christian virtue of humility; this he learned through the writings of the Apostle Paul.

The opening chapters of Book VIII tell how, influenced by the examples of other conversions, he began to desire to become not simply a member of the Church, but one dedicated to the service of God, which meant that he would have to live a life of chastity. This was for him the most difficult break with secular life: "I had now found the pearl of great price," he says, "and I ought to have sold all I had and bought it. But still I hesitated."]

### *Book VIII*

. . . Thus soul-sick was I, and tormented, accusing myself much more severely than my wont, rolling and turning me in my chain, till that were wholly broken, whereby I now was but just, but still was, held. And Thou, O Lord, pressedst upon me in my inward parts by a severe mercy, redoubling the lashes of fear and shame, lest I should again give way, and not bursting that same slight remaining tie, it should recover strength, and bind me the faster. For I said within myself, "Be it done now, be it done now." And as I spake, I all but enacted it. I all but did it, and did it not: yet sunk not back to my former state, but kept my stand hard by, and took breath. And I essayed again, and wanted somewhat less of it, and somewhat less, and all but touched and laid hold of it; and yet

came not at it, nor touched, nor laid hold of it: hesitating to die to death and to live to life: and the worse whereto I was inured, prevailed more with me than the better, whereto I was unused: and the very moment wherein I was to become other than I was, the nearer it approached me, the greater horror did it strike into me; yet did it not strike me back, nor turned me away, but held me in suspense.

The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my ancient mistresses, still held me; they plucked my fleshly garment, and whispered softly, "Dost thou cast us off? and from that moment shall we no more be with thee for ever? and from that moment shall not this or that be lawful for thee for ever?" And what was it which they suggested in that I said, "this or that," what did they suggest, O my God? Let Thy mercy turn it away from the soul of Thy servant. What defilements did they suggest! what shame! And now I much less than half heard them, and not openly shewing themselves and contradicting me, but muttering as it were behind my back, and privily plucking me, as I was departing, but to look back on them. Yet they did retard me, so that I hesitated to burst and shake myself free from them, and to spring over whither I was called; a violent habit saying to me, "Thinkest thou, thou canst live without them?"

But now it spake very faintly. For on that side whither I had set my face, and whither I trembled to go, there appeared unto me the chaste dignity of Continency, serene, yet not relaxedly gay, honestly alluring me to come, and doubt not; and stretching forth to receive and embrace me, her holy hands full of multitudes of good examples. There were so many young men and maidens here, a multitude of youth and every age, grave widows and aged virgins; and Continence herself in all, not barren, but a *fruitful mother of children* of joys, by Thee her Husband, O Lord. And she smiled on me with a persuasive mockery, as would she say, "Canst not thou what these youths, what these maidens can? or can they either in themselves, and not rather in the Lord their God? The Lord their God gave me unto them. Why standest thou in thyself, and so standest not? Cast thyself upon Him, fear not He will not withdraw Himself that thou shouldest fall; cast thyself fearlessly upon Him, He will receive, and will heal thee." And I blushed exceedingly, for that I yet heard the muttering of those toys, and hung in suspense. And she again seemed to say, "Stop thine ears against *those* thy unclean members on the earth, that they may be mortified. They tell thee of delights, but not as doth the law of the Lord thy God. This controversy in my heart was self against self only. But Alypius<sup>1</sup> sitting

1. a student of Augustine's at Carthage; he had joined the Manichees

with him, followed him to Rome and Milan, and now shared the desires and



close by my side, in silence waited the issue of my unwonted emotion.

But when a deep consideration had from the secret bottom of my soul drawn together and heaped up all my misery in the sight of my heart; there arose a mighty storm, bringing a mighty shower of tears. Which that I might pour forth wholly, in its natural expressions, I rose from Alypius: solitude was suggested to me as fitter for the business of weeping; so I retired so far that even his presence could not be a burthen to me. Thus was it then with me, and he perceived something of it; for something I suppose I had spoken, wherein the tones of my voice appeared choked with weeping, and so had risen up. He then remained where we were sitting, most extremely astonished. I cast myself down I know not how, under a certain fig-tree, giving full vent to my tears; and the floods of mine eyes gushed out, an *acceptable sacrifice to Thee*. And, not indeed in these words, yet to this purpose, spake I much unto Thee: *And Thou, O Lord, how long? how long, Lord, wilt Thou be angry, for ever? Remember not our former iniquities*, for I felt that I was held by them. I sent up these sorrowful words; *How long? how long? to-morrow, and to-morrow? Why not now? why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?*

So was I speaking, and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo! I heard from a neighbouring house a voice, as of boy or girl, I know not, chanting, and oft repeating, "Take up and read; Take up and read." Instantly, my countenance altered, I began to think most intently, whether children were wont in any kind of play to sing such words: nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So checking the torrent of my tears, I arose; interpreting it to be no other than a command from God, to open the book, and read the first chapter I should find. For I had heard of Antony,<sup>2</sup> that coming in during the reading of the Gospel, he received the admonition, as if what was being read, was spoken to him; *Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.*<sup>3</sup> And by such oracle he was forthwith converted unto Thee. Eagerly then I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I laid the volume of the Apostle,<sup>4</sup> when I arose thence. I seized, opened, and in silence read that section, on which my eyes first fell: *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh,*<sup>5</sup> in concupiscence. No further would I

doubts which he felt. Alypius finally became a bishop in North Africa.

2. the Egyptian saint whose abstinence and self-control are still proverbial; he was one of the founders of the

system of monastic life.

3. Luke 18:22.

4. Paul.

5. Romans 13:13-14.

read; nor needed I: for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away.

Then putting my finger between, or some other mark, I shut the volume, and with a calmed countenance made it known to Alypius. And what was wrought in him, which I knew not, he thus shewed me. He asked to see what I had read: I shewed him; and he looked even further than I had read, and I knew not what followed. This followed, *him that is weak in the faith, receive*; which he applied to himself, and disclosed to me. And by this admonition was he strengthened; and by a good resolution and purpose, and most corresponding to his character, wherein he did always very far differ from me, for the better, without any turbulent delay he joined me. Thence we go into my mother; we tell her; she rejoiceth: we relate in order how it took place; she leaps for joy, and triumpheth, and blesseth Thee, *Who art able to do above that which we ask or think*; for she perceived that Thou hadst given her more for me, than she was wont to beg by her pitiful and most sorrowful groanings. For Thou convertedst me unto Thyself, so that I sought neither wife, nor any hope of this world, standing in that rule of faith, where Thou hadst shewed me unto her in a vision,<sup>6</sup> so many years before. And Thou didst *convert her mourning into joy*, much more plentiful than she had desired, and in a much more precious and purer way than she erst required, by having grandchildren of my body.

### Book IX

. . . And I resolved in Thy sight, not tumultuously to tear, but gently to withdraw, the service of my tongue from the marts of lip-labour: that the young, no students in Thy law, nor in Thy peace, but in lying dotages and law-skirmishes, should no longer buy at my mouth arms for their madness. And very seasonably, it now wanted but very few days unto the Vacation of the Vintage,<sup>1</sup> and I resolved to endure them, then in a regular way to take my leave, and having been purchased by Thee, no more to return for sale. Our purpose then was known to Thee; but to men, other than our own friends, was it not known. For we had agreed among ourselves not to let it out abroad to any: although to us, now ascending from the *valley of tears*, and singing that *song of degrees*, Thou hadst given *sharp arrows*, and *destroying coals* against the *subtile tongue*, which as though advising for us, would thwart, and would out of love devour us, as it doth its meat. . . .

6. At Carthage, when Augustine was still a Manichee, Monica had dreamed that she was standing on a wooden rule weeping for her son, and then saw

that he was standing on the same rule as herself.

1. This holiday lasted from the end of August to the middle of October.

Moreover, it had at first troubled me, that in this very summer my lungs began to give way, amid too great literary labour,<sup>2</sup> and to breathe deeply with difficulty, and by the pain in my chest to shew that they were injured, and to refuse any full or lengthened speaking; this had troubled me, for it almost constrained me of necessity, to lay down that burthen of teaching, or, if I could be cured and recover, at least to intermit it. But when the full wish for leisure, that I might see *how that Thou art the Lord*, arose, and was fixed, in me; my God, Thou knowest, I began even to rejoice that I had this secondary, and that no feigned, excuse, which might something moderate the offence taken by those, who for their sons' sake, wished me never to have the freedom of Thy sons. Full then of such joy, I endured till that interval of time were run; it may have been some twenty days, yet they were endured manfully; endured, for the covetousness which aforesaid bore a part of this heavy business, had left me, and I remained alone, and had been overwhelmed, had not patience taken its place. Perchance, some of Thy servants, my brethren, may say, that I sinned in this, that with a heart fully set on Thy service, I suffered myself to sit even one hour in the chair of lies. Nor would I be contentious. But hast not Thou, O most merciful Lord, pardoned and remitted this sin also, with my other most horrible and deadly sins, in the holy water? . . .

Now was the day come, wherein I was in deed to be freed of my Rhetoric Professorship, whereof in thought I was already freed. And it was done. Thou didst rescue my tongue, whence 'Thou hadst before rescued my heart. And I blessed Thee, rejoicing; retiring with all mine to the villa.<sup>3</sup> What I there did in writing; which was now enlisted in Thy service, though still, in this breathing-time as it were, panting from the school of pride, my books may witness,<sup>4</sup> as well what I debated with others, as what with myself alone, before Thee: what with Nebridius, who was absent, my Epistles<sup>5</sup> bear witness. . . .

The vintage-vacation ended, I gave notice to the Milanese to provide their scholars with another master to sell words to them; for that I had both made choice to serve Thee, and through my difficulty of breathing and pain in my chest, was not equal to the Professorship. And by letters I signified to Thy Prelate, the holy man Ambrose, my former errors and present desires, begging his advice what of Thy Scriptures I had best read, to become readier

2. since he not only lectured but also read aloud, as is suggested by his comments on Ambrose's silent reading (Book VI).

3. at Cassiciacum, in the country, placed at his disposal by a friend.

4. While at Cassiciacum, Augustine wrote a book attacking the Academic philosophers, a book on the happy life, and another entitled *De ordine*, a treatise on divine providence.

5. His letters to Nebridius are still extant.

and fitter for receiving so great grace. He recommended Isaiah the Prophet: I believe, because he above the rest is a more clear fore-shewer of the Gospel and of the calling of the Gentiles. But I, not understanding the first lesson in him, and imagining the whole to be like it, laid it by, to be resumed when better practised in our Lord's own words.

Thence, when the time was come, wherein I was to give in my name,<sup>6</sup> we left the country and returned to Milan. It pleased Alypius also to be with me born again in Thee, being already clothed with the humility befitting Thy Sacraments; and a most valiant tamer of the body, so as, with unwonted venture, to wear the frozen ground of Italy with his bare feet. We joined with us the boy Adeodatus, born after the flesh, of my sin. Excellently hadst Thou made him. He was not quite fifteen, and in wit surpassed many grave and learned men. I confess unto Thee Thy gifts, O Lord my God, Creator of all, and abundantly able to reform our deformities: for I had no part in that boy, but the sin. For that we brought him up in Thy discipline, it was Thou, none else, had inspired us with it. I confess unto Thee Thy gifts. There is a book of ours entitled *The Master*; it is a dialogue between him and me. Thou knowest, that all there ascribed to the person conversing with me, were his ideas, in his sixteenth year. Much besides, and yet more admirable, I found in him. That talent struck awe into me. And who but Thou could be the workmaster of such wonders? Soon didst Thou take his life from the earth: and I now remember him without anxiety, fearing nothing for his childhood or youth, or his whole self. Him we joined with us, our contemporary in grace, to be brought up in Thy discipline; and we were baptized, and anxiety for our past life vanished from us. Nor was I sated in those days with the wondrous sweetness of considering the depth of Thy counsels concerning the salvation of mankind. How did I weep, in Thy Hymns and Canticles, touched to the quick by the voices of Thy sweet-attuned Church! The voices flowed into mine ears, and the Truth distilled into my heart, whence the affections of my devotion overflowed, and tears ran down, and happy was I therein.

Not long had the Church of Milan begun to use this kind of consolation and exhortation, the brethren zealously joining with harmony of voice and hearts. For it was a year, or not much more, that Justina, mother to the Emperor Valentinian, a child, persecuted Thy servant Ambrose, in favour of her heresy, to which she was seduced by the Arians.<sup>7</sup> The devout people kept watch in

6. as a candidate for baptism.

7. members of a heretical sect who followed the doctrine of Arius (250?–336 A.D.) that the Son had not existed

from all eternity and was therefore inferior to the Father. At the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) Arius and his followers were declared heretical, but the

the Church, ready to die with their Bishop Thy servant. There my mother Thy handmaid, bearing a chief part of those anxieties and watchings, lived for prayer. We, yet unwarmed by the heat of Thy Spirit, still were stirred up by the sight of the amazed and disquieted city. Then it was first instituted that after the manner of the Eastern Churches,<sup>8</sup> Hymns and Psalms should be sung, lest the people should wax faint through the tediousness of sorrow: and from that day to this the custom is retained, divers, yea, almost all Thy congregations, throughout other parts of the world, following herein.

Then didst Thou by a vision discover to Thy forenamed Bishop, where the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius the martyrs lay hid, (whom Thou hadst in Thy secret treasury stored uncorrupted so many years,) whence Thou mightest seasonably produce them to repress the fury of a woman, but an Empress. For when they were discovered and dug up, and with due honour translated to the Ambrosian Basilica,<sup>9</sup> not only they who were vexed with unclean spirits (the devils confessing themselves) were cured, but a certain man, who had for many years been blind, a citizen, and well known to the city, asking and hearing the reason of the people's confused joy, sprang forth, desiring his guide to lead him thither. Led thither, he begged to be allowed to touch with his handkerchief the bier of Thy saints, whose death is precious in Thy sight. Which when he had done, and put to his eyes, they were forthwith opened. Thence did the fame spread, thence Thy praises glowed, shone; thence the mind of that enemy,<sup>10</sup> though not turned to the soundness of believing, was yet turned back from her fury of persecuting. Thanks to Thee, O my God. Whence and whither hast Thou thus led my remembrance, that I should confess these things also unto Thee? which great though they be, I had passed by in forgetfulness. And yet then, when the odour of Thy ointments was so fragrant, did we not run after Thee. Therefore did I more weep among the singing of Thy Hymns, formerly sighing after Thee, and at length breathing in Thee, as far as the breath may enter into this our house of grass.

Thou that makest men to dwell of one mind in one house, didst join with us Euodius also, a young man of our own city. Who being an officer of Court,<sup>11</sup> was before us converted to Thee and baptized: and quitting his secular warfare, girded himself to Thine. We were together, about to dwell together in our devout purpose. We sought where we might serve Thee most usefully, and were together re-

Arian heresy remained as a serious problem for the Church for many years. Justina demanded that Ambrose allow the Arians to hold public services inside the walls of Milan.

8. the Greek-speaking churches of the

Eastern half of the empire. They split off from the Catholic Church in the ninth century.

9. church.

10. Justina.

11. an administrative officer.

turning to Africa: whitherward being as far as Ostia,<sup>12</sup> my mother departed this life. Much I omit, as hastening much. Receive my confessions and thanksgivings, O my God, for innumerable things whereof I am silent. But I will not omit whatsoever my soul would bring forth concerning that Thy handmaid, who brought me forth, both in the flesh, that I might be born to this temporal light, and in heart, that I might be born to Light eternal. Not her gifts, but Thine in her, would I speak of; for neither did she make nor educate herself. Thou createdst her; nor did her father and mother know what a one should come from them. And the sceptre of Thy Christ, the discipline of Thine only Son, in a Christian house, a good member of Thy Church, educated her in Thy fear. Yet for her good discipline, was she wont to commend not so much her mother's diligence, as that of a certain decrepit maid-servant, who had carried her father when a child, as little ones used to be carried at the backs of elder girls. For which reason, and for her great age, and excellent conversation, was she, in that Christian family, well respected by its heads. Whence also the charge of her master's daughters was entrusted to her, to which she gave diligent heed, restraining them earnestly, when necessary, with a holy severity, and teaching them with a grave discretion. For, except at those hours wherein they were most temperately fed at their parents' table, she would not suffer them, though parched with thirst, to drink even water; preventing an evil custom, and adding this wholesome advice; "Ye drink water now, because you have not wine in your power; but when you come to be married, and be made mistresses of cellars and cupboards, you will scorn water, but the custom of drinking will abide." By this method of instruction, and the authority she had, she refrained the greediness of childhood, and moulded their very thirst to such an excellent moderation, that what they should not, that they would not.

And yet (as Thy handmaid told me her son) there had crept upon her a love of wine. For when (as the manner was) she, as though a sober maiden, was bidden by her parents to draw wine out of the hogshcad, holding the vessel under the opening, before she poured the wine into the flagon, she sipped a little with the tip of her lips; for more her instinctive feelings refused. For this she did, not out of any desire of drink, but out of the exuberance of youth, whereby it boils over in mirthful freaks, which in youthful spirits are wont to be kept under by the gravity of their elders. And thus by adding to that little, daily littles, (*for whoso despiseth little things, shall fall by little and little,*) she had fallen into such a habit, as greedily to drink off her little cup brimfull almost of wine. Where

12. a port on the southwest coast of Italy; it was the port of Rome and the point of departure for Africa.

was then that discreet old woman, and that her earnest counter-manding? Would aught avail against a secret disease, if Thy healing hand, O Lord, watched not over us? Father, mother, and governors absent, Thou present, who createdst, who callest, who also by those set over us, workest something towards the salvation of our souls, what didst Thou then, O my God? how didst Thou cure her? how heal her? didst Thou not out of another soul bring forth a hard and a sharp taunt, like a lancet out of Thy secret store, and with one touch remove all that foul stuff? For a maid-servant with whom she used to go to the cellar, falling to words (as it happens) with her little mistress, when alone with her, taunted her with this fault, with most bitter insult, calling her wine-bibber. With which taunt she, stung to the quick, saw the foulness of her fault, and instantly condemned and forsook it. As flattering friends pervert, so reproachful enemies mostly correct. Yet not what by them Thou doest, but what themselves purposed, dost Thou repay them. For she in her anger sought to vex her young mistress, not to amend her; and did it in private, either for that the time and place of the quarrel so found them; or lest herself also should have anger, for discovering it thus late. But Thou, Lord, Governor of all in heaven and earth, who turnest to Thy purposes the deepest currents, and the ruled turbulence of the tide of times, didst by the very unhealthiness of one soul, heal another; lest any, when he observes this, should ascribe it to his own power, even when another, whom he wished to be reformed, is reformed through words of his.

Brought up thus modestly and soberly, and made subject rather by Thee to her parents, than by her parents to Thee, so soon as she was of marriageable age, being bestowed upon a husband, she served him as her lord; and did her diligence to win him unto Thee, preaching Thee unto him by her conversation; by which Thou ornamentedst her, making her reverently amiable, and admirable unto her husband. And she so endured the wronging of her bed, as never to have any quarrel with her husband thereon. For she looked for Thy mercy upon him, that believing in Thee, he might be made chaste. But besides this, he was fervid, as in his affections, so in anger: but she had learnt, not to resist an angry husband, not in deed only, but not even in word. Only when he was smoothed and tranquil, and in a temper to receive it, she would give an account of her actions, if haply he had overhastily taken offence. In a word, while many matrons, who had milder husbands, yet bore even in their faces marks of shame, would in familiar talk blame their husbands' lives, she would blame their tongues, giving them, as in jest, earnest advice; "That from the time they heard the marriage writings read to them, they should account them as indentures, whereby they were made servants; and so, remember-

ing their condition, ought not to set themselves up against their lords." And when they, knowing what a choleric husband she endured, marvelled, that it had never been heard, nor by any token perceived, that Patricius had beaten his wife, or that there had been any domestic difference between them, even for one day, and confidentially asking the reason, she taught them her practice above mentioned. Those wives who observed it found the good, and returned thanks; those who observed it not, found no relief, and suffered.

Her mother-in-law also, at first by whisperings of evil servants incensed against her, she so overcame by observance and persevering endurance and meekness, that she<sup>13</sup> of her own accord discovered to her son the meddling tongues, whereby the domestic peace betwixt her and her daughter-in-law had been disturbed, asking him to correct them. Then, when in compliance with his mother, and for the well-ordering of the family, and the harmony of its members, he had with stripes corrected those discovered, at her will who had discovered them, she promised the like reward to any who, to please her, should speak ill of her daughter-in-law to her: and none now venturing, they lived together with a remarkable sweetness of mutual kindness.

This great gift also Thou bestowdest, O my God, my mercy, upon that good handmaid of Thine, in whose womb Thou createdst me, that between any disagreeing and discordant parties where she was able, she shewed herself such a peacemaker, that hearing on both sides most bitter things, such as swelling and indigested choler uses to break out into, when the crudities of enmities are breathed out in sour discourses to a present friend against an absent enemy, she never would disclose aught of the one unto the other, but what might tend to their reconciliation. A small good this might appear to me, did I not to my grief know numberless persons, who through some horrible and wide-spreading contagion of sin, not only disclose to persons mutually angered things said in anger, but add withal things never spoken, whereas to humane humanity, it ought to seem a light thing, not to foment or increase ill will by ill words, unless one study withal by good words to quench it. Such was she, Thyself, her most inward Instructor, teaching her in the school of the heart.

Finally, her own husband, towards the very end of his earthly life, did she gain unto Thee; nor had she to complain of that in him as a believer, which before he was a believer she had borne from him. She was also the servant of thy servants; whosoever of them knew her, did in her much praise and honour and love Thee; for that through the witness of the fruits of a holy conversation

13. the mother-in-law.



they perceived Thy presence in her heart. For she had been *the wife of one man*, had *requited her parents*, had *governed her house* piously, was *well reported of for good works*, had *brought up children*,<sup>14</sup> so often *travailing in birth of them*, as she saw them swerving from Thee. Lastly, of all of us Thy servants, O Lord, (whom on occasion of Thy own gift Thou sufferest to speak,) us, who before her sleeping in Thee lived united<sup>15</sup> together, having received the grace of Thy baptism, did she so take care of, as though she had been mother of us all; so served us, as though she had been child to us all.

The day now approaching whereon she was to depart this life, (which day Thou well knewest, we knew not,) it came to pass, Thyself, as I believe, by Thy secret ways so ordering it, that she and I stood alone, leaning in a certain window, which looked into the garden of the house where we now lay, at Ostia; where removed from the din of men, we were recovering from the fatigues of a long journey, for the voyage. We were discoursing then together, alone, very sweetly; and *forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before*, we were enquiring between ourselves in the presence of the Truth, which Thou art, of what sort the eternal life of the saints was to be, *which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man*. But yet we gasped with the mouth of our heart, after those heavenly streams of Thy fountain, *the fountain of life*, which is *with Thee*; that being bedewed thence according to our capacity, we might in some sort meditate upon so high a mystery.

And when our discourse was brought to that point, that the very highest delight of the earthly senses, in the very purest material light, was, in respect of the sweetness of that life, not only not worthy of comparison, but not even of mention; we raising up ourselves with a more glowing affection towards the Being itself<sup>16</sup> did by degrees pass through all things bodily, even the very heaven, whence sun and moon, and stars shine upon the earth; yea, we were soaring higher yet, by inward musing, and discourse, and admiring of Thy works; and we came to our own souls, and went beyond them, that we might arrive at that region of never-failing plenty, where *Thou feedest Israel* for ever with the food of truth, and where life is the *Wisdom by whom all these things are made*, and what have been, and what shall be, and she is not made, but is, as she hath been, and so shall she be ever; yea rather, to "have been," and "hereafter to be," are not in her, but only "to be,"

14. Augustine is quoting Paul's description of the duties of a widow. (I Timothy 5.)

15. Augustine and his fellow converts.

16. reality, the divine principle. This ecstasy of Augustine and Monica is throughout described in philosophical terms.

seeing she is eternal. For to "have been," and to "be hereafter," are not eternal. And while we were discoursing and panting after her, we slightly touched on her with the whole effort of our heart; and we sighed, and there we leave bound *the first fruits of the Spirit*; and returned to vocal expressions of our mouth, where the word spoken has beginning and end. And what is like unto Thy Word, our Lord, who *endureth in Himself* without becoming old, and *maketh all things new*?

We were saying then: If to any the tumult of the flesh were hushed, hushed the images of earth, and waters, and air, hushed also the poles of heaven, yea the very soul be hushed to herself, and by not thinking on self surmount self, hushed all dreams and imaginary revelations, every tongue and every sign, and whatsoever exists only in transition, since if any could hear, all these say, *We made not ourselves, but He made us that abideth for ever*—If then having uttered this, they too should be hushed, having roused only our ears to Him who made them, and He alone speak, not by them, but by Himself, that we may hear His Word, not through any tongue of flesh, nor Angel's voice, nor sound of thunder, nor in the dark riddle of a similitude, but, might hear Whom in these things we love, might hear His Very Self without these, (as we two now strained ourselves, and in swift thought touched on that Eternal Wisdom, which abideth over all;)—could this be continued on, and other visions of kind far unlike be withdrawn, and this one ravish, and absorb, and wrap up its beholder amid these inward joys, so that life might be for ever like that one moment of understanding which now we sighed after; were not this, *Enter into thy Master's joy?*<sup>17</sup> And when shall that be? When *we shall all rise again*, though *we shall not all be changed*?

Such things was I speaking, and even if not in this very manner, and these same words, yet, Lord, Thou knowest, that in that day when we were speaking of these things, and this world with all its delights became, as we spake, contemptible to us, my mother said, "Son, for mine own part I have no further delight in any thing in this life. What I do here any longer, and to what end I am here, I know not, now that my hopes in this world are accomplished. One thing there was, for which I desired to linger for a while in this life, that I might see thee a Catholic Christian before I died. My God hath done this for me more abundantly, that I should now see thee, despising earthly happiness, become His servant: what do I here?"

What answer I made her unto these things, I remember not. For scarce five days after, or not much more, she fell sick of a fever; and in that sickness one day she fell into a swoon, and was

for a while withdrawn from these visible things. We hastened round her; but she was soon brought back to her senses; and looking on me and my brother standing by her, said to us enquiringly, "Where was I?" And then looking fixedly on us, with grief amazed; "Here," saith she, "shall you bury your mother." I held my peace and refrained weeping; but my brother spake something, wishing for her, as the happier lot, that she might die, not in a strange place, but in her own land. Whereat, she with anxious look, checking him with her eyes, for that he still *savoured such things*, and then looking upon me; "Behold," saith she, "what he saith:" and soon after to us both, "Lay," she saith, "this body any where; let not the care for that any way disquiet you: this only I request, that you would remember me at the Lord's altar, wherever you be." And having delivered this sentiment in what words she could, she held her peace, being exercised by her growing sickness.

But I, considering Thy gifts, Thou unseen God, which Thou instillest into the hearts of Thy faithful ones, whence wondrous fruits do spring, did rejoice and give thanks to Thee, recalling what I before knew, how careful and anxious she had ever been, as to her place of burial, which she had provided and prepared for herself by the body of her husband. For because they had lived in great harmony together; she also wished (so little can the human mind embrace things divine) to have this addition to that happiness, and to have it remembered among men, that after her pilgrimage beyond the seas, what was earthly of this united pair had been permitted to be united beneath the same earth. But when this emptiness had through the fulness of Thy goodness begun to cease in her heart, I knew not, and rejoiced admiring what she had so disclosed to me; though indeed in that our discourse also in the window, when she said, "What do I here any longer?" there appeared no desire of dying in her own country. I heard afterwards also, that when we were now at Ostia, she with a mother's confidence, when I was absent, one day discoursed with certain of my friends about the contempt of this life, and the blessing of death: and when they were amazed at such courage which Thou hadst given to a woman, and asked, "Whether she were not afraid to leave her body so far from her own city?" she replied, "Nothing is far to God; nor was it to be feared lest at the end of the world, He should not recognize whence He were to raise me up." On the ninth day then of her sickness, and the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the three and thirtieth of mine, was that religious and holy soul freed from the body.

I closed her eyes; and there flowed a mighty sorrow into my heart, which was overflowing into tears; mine eyes at the same time, by the violent command of my mind, drank up their fountain

wholly dry; and woe was me in such a strife! But when she breathed her last, the boy Adeodatus burst out into a loud lament; then, checked by us all, held his peace. In like manner also a childish feeling in me, which was, through my heart's youthful voice, finding its vent in weeping, was checked and silenced. For we thought it not fitting to solemnize that funeral with tearful lament, and groanings: for thereby do they for the most part express grief for the departed, as though unhappy, or altogether dead; whereas she was neither unhappy in her death, nor altogether dead. Of this, we were assured on good grounds, the testimony of her good conversation and her *faith unfeigned*.

What then was it which did grievously pain me within, but a fresh wound wrought through the sudden wrench of that most sweet and dear custom of living together? I joyed indeed in her testimony, when, in that her last sickness, mingling her endearments with my acts of duty, she called me "dutiful," and mentioned, with great affection of love, that she never had heard any harsh or reproachful sound uttered by my mouth against her. But yet, O my God, Who madest us, what comparison is there betwixt that honour that I paid to her, and her slavery for me? Being then forsaken of so great comfort in her, my soul was wounded, and that life rent asunder as it were, which, of hers and mine together, had been made but one.

The boy then being stilled from weeping, Euodius took up the Psalter, and began to sing, our whole house answering him, the Psalm, *I will sing of mercy and judgment to Thee, O Lord*.<sup>18</sup> But hearing what we were doing, many brethren and religious women came together; and whilst they (whose office it was) made ready for the burial, as the manner is, I (in a part of the house, where I might properly), together with those who thought not fit to leave me, discoursed upon something fitting the time; and by this balm of truth, assuaged that torment, known to Thee, they unknowing and listening intently, and conceiving me to be without all sense of sorrow. But in Thy ears, where none of them heard, I blamed the weakness of my feelings, and refrained my flood of grief, which gave way a little unto me; but again came, as with a tide, yet not so as to burst out into tears, nor to a change of countenance; still I knew what I was keeping down in my heart. And being very much displeased, that these human things had such power over me, which in the due order and appointment of our natural condition, must needs come to pass, with a new grief I grieved for my grief, and was thus worn by a double sorrow.

And behold, the corpse was carried to the burial; we went and returned without tears. For neither in those prayers which we

18. the opening words of Psalm 101.

poured forth unto Thee, when the sacrifice of our ransom<sup>19</sup> was offered for her, when now the corpse was by the grave's side, as the manner there is, previous to its being laid therein, did I weep even during those prayers; yet was I the whole day in secret heavily sad, and with troubled mind prayed Thee, as I could, to heal my sorrow, yet Thou didst not; impressing, I believe, upon my memory by this one instance, how strong is the bond of all habit, even upon a soul, which now feeds upon no deceiving Word. It seemed also good to me to go and bathe, having heard that the bath had its name (balneum) from the Greek βαλαρείον, for that it drives sadness from the mind.<sup>20</sup> And this also I confess unto Thy mercy, *Father of the fatherless*, that I bathed, and was the same as before I bathed. For the bitterness of sorrow could not exude out of my heart. Then I slept, and woke up again, and found my grief not a little softened; and as I was alone in my bed, I remembered those true verses of Thy Ambrose. For Thou art the

Maker of all, the Lord,  
And Ruler of the height,  
Who, robing day in light, hast poured  
Soft slumbers o'er the night,  
That to our limbs the power  
Of toil may be renew'd,  
And hearts be rais'd that sink and cower,  
And sorrows be subdu'd;

And then by little and little I recovered my former thoughts of Thy handmaid, her holy conversation towards Thee, her holy tenderness and observance towards us, whereof I was suddenly deprived: and I was minded to weep in Thy sight, for her and for myself, in her behalf and in my own. And I gave way to the tears which I before restrained, to overflow as much as they desired; reposing my heart upon them; and it found rest in them, for it was in Thy ears, not in those of man, who would have scornfully interpreted my weeping. And now, Lord, in writing I confess it unto Thee. Read it, who will, and interpret it, how he will: and if he finds sin therein, that I wept my mother for a small portion of an hour, (the mother who for the time was dead to mine eyes, who had for many years wept for me, that I might live in Thine eyes,) let him not deride me; but rather, if he be one of large charity, let him weep himself for my sins unto Thee, the Father of all the brethren of Thy Christ.

But now, with a heart cured of that wound, wherein it might seem blameworthy for an earthly feeling, I pour out unto Thee, our

19. *the sacrifice of our ransom*: the Eucharist.

20. Augustine evidently derives the

Greek word for "bath" from the words *ballo* and *ania*, which mean "cast away" and "sorrow" respectively.

God, in behalf of that Thy handmaid, a far different kind of tears, flowing from a spirit shaken by the thoughts of the dangers of every soul *that dieth in Adam*. And although she having been quickened in Christ, even before her release from the flesh, had lived to the praise of Thy name for her faith and conversation; yet dare I not say that from what time Thou regeneratedst her by baptism, no word issued from her mouth against Thy Commandment. Thy Son, the Truth, hath said, *Whosoever shall say unto his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire*. And woe be even unto the commendable life of men, if, laying aside mercy, Thou shouldst examine it. But because Thou art not extreme in inquiring after sins, we confidently hope to find some place with Thee. But whosoever reckons up his real merits to Thee, what reckons he up to Thee, but Thine own gifts? O that men would know themselves to be men; *and that he that glorieth, would glory in the Lord*.

I therefore, O my Praise and my Life, God of my heart, laying aside for a while her good deeds, for which I give thanks to Thee with joy, do now beseech Thee for the sins of my mother. Harken unto me, I entreat Thee, by the Medicine of our wounds, Who hung upon the tree, and now *sitting at Thy right hand maketh intercession to Thee for us*. I know that she dealt mercifully, and from her heart *forgave her debtors their debts, do Thou also forgive her debts*, whatever she may have contracted in so many years, since the water of salvation. Forgive her, Lord, forgive, I beseech Thee; *enter not into judgment with her. Let Thy mercy be exalted above Thy justice*, since Thy words are true, and *Thou hast promised mercy unto the merciful*; which Thou gavest them to be, *who wilt have mercy on whom Thou wilt have mercy*; and wilt have compassion, *on whom Thou hast had compassion*.

And, I believe, Thou hast already done what I ask; but *accept, O Lord, the free-will offerings of my mouth*. For she, the day of her dissolution now at hand, took no thought to have her body sumptuously wound up, or embalmed with spices; nor desired she a choice monument, or to be buried in her own land. These things she enjoined us not; but desired only to have her name commemorated at Thy Altar, which she had served without intermission of one day: whence she knew that holy sacrifice to be dispensed, by which the *hand-writing that was against us, is blotted out*; through which the enemy was triumphed over, who summing up our offences, and seeking what to lay to our charge, *found nothing in Him*, in Whom we conquer. Who shall restore to Him the innocent blood? Who repay Him the price wherewith He bought us, and so take us from Him? Unto the Sacrament of which our ransom, Thy handmaid bound her soul by the bond of faith. Let none sever her from Thy protection: let neither *the lion*

*nor the dragon* interpose himself by force or fraud. For she will not answer that she owes nothing, lest she be convicted and seized by the crafty accuser: but she will answer, that *her sins are forgiven* her by Him, to Whom none can repay that price, which He, Who owed nothing, paid for us.

May she rest then in peace with the husband, before and after whom she had never any; whom she obeyed, *with patience bringing forth fruit* unto Thee, that she might win him also unto Thee. And inspire, O Lord my God, inspire Thy servants my brethren, Thy sons my masters, whom with voice, and heart, and pen I serve, that so many as shall read these Confessions, may at Thy Altar remember Monnica Thy handmaid, with Patricius, her sometimes husband, by whose bodies Thou broughtest me into this life, how, I know not. May they with devout affection remember my parents in this transitory light, my brethren under Thee our Father in our Catholic Mother, and my fellow citizens in that eternal Jerusalem, which Thy pilgrim people sigheth after from their Exodus, even unto their return thither. That so, my mother's last request of me, may through my confessions, more than through my prayers, be, through the prayers of many, more abundantly fulfilled to her.







# Masterpieces of the Middle Ages

EDITED BY

JOHN C. McGALLIARD

*Professor of English, The State University of Iowa*



The period of the Middle Ages—approximately 500–1500 A.D.—encompasses a thousand years of European history distinguished by the unique fusion of a Heroic-Age society with Greco-Roman culture and Christian religion. The era is fairly well marked off by the emergence and disappearance of certain massive forces. It begins with the collapse of the Roman Empire in Western Europe, a development coincident with and partly occasioned by the settlement of Germanic peoples within the territory of the empire. It ends with the discovery of the Western Hemisphere, the invention of the printing press, the consolidation of strong national states, the break in religious unity brought about by the Protestant Reformation, and the renewal—after a lapse of nearly a thousand years—of direct contact with Greek art, thought,

and literature. The medieval centuries created, or at least refashioned, and bequeathed to us such institutional patterns as the Christian church; the monarchical state; the town and village; the traditional European social order—the “lords spiritual,” the “lords temporal,” with the hierarchy of nobility and gentry ranging from duke to knight, and the third, or bourgeois, estate; the university; the system and logical method of Scholastic philosophy; Romanesque and Gothic architecture; and a rich variety of literary forms.

The literature of the earlier Middle Ages reflects directly and clearly the life and civilization of a Heroic Age. The dominant figure is the fighting king or chieftain; the favorite pursuit is war; the characteristic goals are power, wealth, and glory; and the primary virtues, accordingly, are valor and loyalty. The liter-

ary pattern is based on actuality, of which it presents a kind of idealization. In early Germanic and Celtic society the king ruled a small, essentially tribal nation; he and his companions in battle constituted a formal or informal noble class controlling the life of the people. The poems of such a society naturally tell chiefly of the fights of great champions, though also of the druids or other counselors who advised them and of the minstrels who entertained them.

The proportions and the emphasis are much the same in the literature of the Irish, the Scandinavians, the French of the twelfth century, the Germans of the thirteenth. To be sure, the Irish and Scandinavian stories were fashioned before the influence of Christianity was felt, or apart from it. They portray the old, pagan ethics and way of life. The Icelandic family sagas show the Heroic Age in its less spectacular aspects: the champion is still a fighter, like Hrafnkel, but he is also engaged in the more prosaic activity of farming or trading. And he does not stand alone, for there are many men with the same ambitions and not a few with equal powers, Thorgeir and Thorkel, for instance. In Iceland in the tenth century any free man might theoretically become a Heroic-Age figure. The hero of the *Song of Roland*, a twelfth-century French work, combines the fighting chieftain, serving his king, with the devout Crusader; and Archbishop Turpin is both spiritual adviser and fighting champion.

In the literature of the fourteenth century, the warrior plays

a smaller rôle and is assimilated to the more extensive pattern of later medieval civilization. Thus in Dante's Heaven only one of the nine celestial spheres—Mars—is occupied by great men-at-arms, all devout Christians, of course. Chaucer's Knight and Squire are only two among twenty-nine pilgrims on their way to Canterbury. The Knight is devoted to truth and honor, generosity, and courteous conduct, while his son, along with other virtues appropriate to a young soldier, possesses those of a courtly lover. The fighting champion of the Heroic Age has become the "officer and gentleman" of the modern world.

This gradual assimilation of the Celtic and Germanic hero to a civilization in which Christianity ordered the Greco-Roman culture to new ends was made possible by the religious unity and authority of Western Europe. The medieval millennium was indeed an age of faith, though it was far from being an age of religious passivity or inertia. The first half of the period was occupied in winning the new peoples of Europe to Christianity. When this had been accomplished, the Crusades began—a series of holy wars intended to rescue Palestine from pagan occupation and, in general, to defeat and either destroy or convert the pagans, chiefly Mohammedans. But the Greek and Arabic learning and philosophy which these non-Christian people introduced into Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries demanded an intellectual alertness. The sharpness of the Crusader's sword had to be

matched by the acumen of the Scholastic philosopher; one of the chief works of St. Thomas Aquinas is a summation of principles in defense of Christianity "against the pagans" (his *Summa contra Gentiles*). Medieval Christianity could never afford to take itself for granted. For the first four centuries after Christ the new religion was aggressively on the defensive; thereafter it had to be actively on the offensive in both the practical and the ideological spheres. Nevertheless, in Western Europe itself the combination of theological unity and ecclesiastical authority was a phenomenon unmatched either before or after the Middle Ages. The Roman Empire had provided political unity, law, and order, to assure the success of secular pursuits. Beyond that, it had left moral and spiritual problems to be handled by the individual, singly or in voluntary or ethnic groups. In medieval Europe political disunity was at something like a maximum; but under the leadership and direction of the Church there was achieved a remarkable unanimity of spiritual, moral, and intellectual attitudes and ideals.

The community of European culture in this period was such that the productions of individual countries look like regional manifestations of a central nuclear force. Generally speaking, students and scholars moved freely from land to land; monks, abbots, and bishops might be sent from the country of their birth to serve or preside in distant places; artists and poets wandered widely either in the

train of or in search of patrons. Besides his native tongue, the educated man might be expected to speak and write the common "standard" language of Europe—Latin. In an age when the political state was relatively weak, a man's strongest loyalties were to an individual, a feudal lord, for example; to a code, such as the code of chivalry; to an order—of monks or friars or knights; or simply to the Church itself, if, like so many medieval men of intellectual interests, he was a cleric of some sort.

These ties—except for the feudal, and sometimes including that also—were *international* in nature. In such a cultural atmosphere the themes and subjects and techniques of art and literature circulated freely throughout Europe. The Gothic architecture of a building is a more central aspect of it than the fact that it was designed and built by an English, a French, a German, or an Italian school of builders. Christianity itself furnished a common subject matter for painters, sculptors, and countless others skilled in the graphic and plastic arts; the biblical stories and scenes had the same meaning in every country. The stories of Charlemagne, Roland, and Arthur, of Aeneas, of Troy and Thebes, were European literary property. They were handled and rehandled, copied, translated, adapted, expanded, condensed, and in general appropriated by innumerable authors, writing in various languages, with no thought of property rights or misgivings about plagiarism. There were no copyright regulations and no author's roy-

alties to motivate insistence on individuality of authorship; there was comparatively little concern about the identity of the artist. Many medieval poems and tales are anonymous, including some of the greatest.

The submergence of the artist in his work is accounted for in part, at least, by the medieval system of human values. The dominant hierarchy of values—we have seen that it did not dominate universally, especially in the literature of northern Europe—was based on the Christian view of man. Man, in this conception, is a creature of God, toward whom he is inevitably oriented but from whom he is separated by the world in which he must live his earthly, mortal life. Human civilization under Christian direction may be regarded as ideally designed—even if not actually so functioning—to assist man on his way to union with God. This is the criterion for the ultimate appraisal of all the institutions of society and all the patterns of culture. Hence derive the scale, the order, the hierarchical categories of medieval life and thought. Since the spiritual side of man transcends the material, the saint becomes the ideal. The saint is one whose life is most fully subdued, assimilated, and ordered to the spiritual. On earth he may be a hermit, like Cuthbert; a reformer of monasteries, like Bernard; a philosopher and a theologian, like Aquinas; a king, like Louis IX of France; or a humble man in private life, like the acrobat in the story "Our Lady's Tumbler." Since communion with God—

the essential aspect of bliss in heaven—is an experience of the soul, the contemplative life, which prepares for the mystical communion, is superior to any form of the active life. Hence the monk—by virtue of his vocation—has an advantage over the secular priest, just as the priest is, other things being equal, in a position spiritually more desirable than that of the layman. As a whole, medieval literature is a study in human life judged according to this scale of values. The scale is represented clearly in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Secular-value patterns are assimilated to it, for instance in the *Song of Roland*; or it may be taken for granted without much emphasis, as in Chaucer's works. But it is always there, whether below or above the surface. For the modern reader it supplies a focus for the adequate reading and understanding of most of the literature of the Middle Ages.

#### THE SAGA OF HRAFNKEL PRIEST OF FREY

Aside from the poems of the *Edda*, the greatest literary achievement of medieval Scandinavia was the prose saga. Taken as a whole, the sagas constitute one of the finest bodies of literature in Europe or in the world. *The Saga of Burnt Njal*, *The Laxdaela Saga*, and *The Saga of Gisli Son of Súr* are worthy of comparison with the best novels of later centuries. The saga was originally a form of oral literature. Some—called *lying sagas*—were told and heard as candid pieces of fiction. Others, including most of the

best, were founded to a considerable extent on fact; this was especially true of the *family sagas*. *The Saga of Hrafnkel*, which was for a long time regarded as one of these, is now considered as the work of a highly gifted writer of fiction. The events recounted in the best of the sagas occurred between the late ninth and the early eleventh century. The narratives deal primarily with the great families living in Iceland in the generations immediately following its discovery and settlement, chiefly by Norwegians. The date of the extant written texts may be anywhere from the late twelfth to the fourteenth century.

The story of *Hrafnkel* is a good example of the shorter saga. It is the straightforward account of a proud man who suffers an unexpected defeat, quietly rebuilds his strength, profiting incidentally by the lesson of experience, and then crushes his enemies by a sudden but well-calculated stroke. The tone is calm, deliberate, unpretentious. The incidents are related quietly, objectively, with no romantic playing up of "adventure." Necessary preliminary information is given economically and then the action begins without fanfare. Dialogue and description are always a functional part of the action. There is no moralizing or psychologizing; characterization, accomplished through action, is objective; villains and plumed knights are alike absent. The author gets his effect by rigorous omission—by concentration upon the essentials.

The best sagas tell us just enough about each character

and each action to enable us to appraise the one correctly in the light of the other. Since there are no caricatures and no real scoundrels in *The Saga of Hrafnkel*, the story includes no merely frivolous or unqualifiedly evil acts. The killing and other violent deeds which occur are not performed either by highway robbers or by psychopathic characters. The society in which they take place is different in some respects from any with which we are familiar. The teachings of Christianity played little or no part in tenth-century Iceland; the new religion was not adopted, even formally, until the year 1000. On the other hand, there was a very precise code of law (transmitted orally), mostly derived from Norway but elaborated somewhat in Iceland. Behind the letter of the law there was the unformulated tradition of ethics and mores. All of the people portrayed in the saga probably subscribed to this same traditional body of ethics and laws. They disagreed only about concrete cases; but that led to difficulties and conflicts, which are reflected in the events of the saga. For, though Iceland had adequate legislative machinery in the form of the annual Thing, it had no proper executive force with which to carry out its laws or to assure fair trial of cases in court. Thus, within the range of customary principles of conduct, every powerful man was obliged to be, to some degree, a law unto himself.

There is no little irony in the course of events related in the saga. At the outset *Hrafnkel* is arrogant and overbearing; Thor-

kel, an enterprising man from the other end of the country, is motivated by the wish to take him down a peg. But although Hrafnkel deserves his unfavorable reputation in general, in this particular instance he has acted with at least some degree of consideration for others. He has killed Einar reluctantly, out of a serious regard for his oath to Frey, his favorite god—and only after Einar violates his express order and disregards his solemn warning. Then, contrary to his habit, he offers a compensation regarded as decidedly generous by everyone, including Sám—by everyone, that is, except old Thorbjörn. Thorbjörn's insistence on a more formal settlement is not motivated by love or respect for his dead son; it is clearly the stubbornness of a man with an inferiority complex.

Sám is a man who has opportunities thrust upon him to which he is not quite equal. Not devoid of shrewdness, common sense, and ambition to a degree, he lacks the imagination and the daring of a great chief; given the chance, he cannot reach the level of a Hrafnkel, a Thorgeir, or a Thorkel. We respect his intelligence when he demurs at starting the suit, his final acceptance of it out of regard for Thorbjörn, and his perseverance—contrasted with Thorbjörn's desire to surrender—when the outlook is unfavorable. But he does not seem to realize the danger, as well as the futility, of winning an unexecuted verdict against Hrafnkel; Thorgeir and Thorkel point it out to him. When he spares the life of

Hrafnkel we are tempted to approve his humanity. But he fails to see that such a middle course is dangerous. Lacking the ruthlessness to kill Hrafnkel, he also lacks the magnanimity to treat him with real generosity—admittedly something not to be expected in that world—and the foresight to estimate the future strength of his foe. The judgment of the author, and of the saga age, is represented by the final contempt and pity with which Thorgeir and Thorkel regard him.

### THE SONG OF ROLAND

With some literal inaccuracy, but with substantial truth, it has been said that French literature begins with the *Song of Roland* (*Chanson de Roland*). Certainly it is the first great narrative poem in that language. Of unknown authorship and date, it was apparently composed in the decade or decades after the year 1100. Imbued with the spirit of the First Crusade, it seems to reproduce some details of the campaigns and expeditions to capture and hold the Holy Land for Christendom. The story it tells was developed from a historical incident in the career of Charlemagne (Charles the Great). As the Emperor was returning from a successful war in northern Spain, the Gascons attacked his baggage train and rear guard in the mountain passes of the Pyrenees. The rear guard perished, including Roland, the prefect of the Breton March. These events occurred in the year 778. Our poet of the twelfth century has transformed them—somewhat as Geoffrey of

Monmouth, Chrétien de Troyes, and Malory transformed incidents involving the probably also historical Arthur, his exploits, and the deeds of his warriors. The Charles of the *Roland*, a magnificent figure, is white-haired and venerable, and not without a touch of the miraculous: though still valiant in fight, he is reputed among the enemy to be two hundred years old, or more. He is served especially by a choice band of leaders, the twelve peers, of whom the chief is Roland, his nephew—a relationship that in Heroic narrative intensifies either loyalty or disloyalty. The enemy, too, has been changed. Not a few border Gascons or Basques, but enormous Saracen armies fight against Roland and the Emperor. Thus we have a holy war; all the motives of a Crusade are invoked in this struggle of Christians against Mohammedans. Keeping the Emperor as the central *background* figure, the poet has concentrated his efforts on Roland as the hero, the central *foreground* character. Close beside him stand Olivier, the wise and faithful friend, and Ganelon, whose hatred of Roland leads him to treason against Charles.

The world of the poem is an idealization of feudal society in the early twelfth century. This society was headed by proud barons—a hereditary nobility—whose independent spirit found liberal scope in valiant action, fierce devotion, and bitter personal antagonism. A man was esteemed for his prowess in battle, for his loyalty to his king or other feudal chief, and for his

wisdom, as the portrait of Olivier reminds us. The action of the poem is infused with a warm glow of patriotic feeling—not the flag-waving variety, but a cherishing love of the homeland, “sweet France.” It might be called regional rather than political patriotism, for in a feudal regime a man’s binding obligations are to his lord rather than to the country as a whole. Yet the larger issue enters, in a special way: in the second half of the poem, Ganelon is finally condemned and punished because in compassing the destruction of Roland he has injured the king and the French nation: the poet denies Ganelon’s claim that these are separable things.

The present volume includes only the first half of the poem, considerably abridged. But this portion has a satisfactory completeness. We see the anger of Ganelon at Roland, out of which grows his treachery and the attack of the Saracens; the valor of Roland, and the rest, in battle; and their heroic death. The second half of the poem relates the vengeance taken by Charles against the Saracens—in two separate battles—and the trial and execution of Ganelon. Although the *Song of Roland* was the work, and probably the *written* work, of a well-educated man, during the period immediately following its composition it was sung or chanted. It is divided into strophes averaging fourteen lines, each of ten (or eleven) syllables.

It is easy to see why modern French readers and critics assign the *Roland* a high place in their national literature. Inher-

ent in its structure and texture are the qualities especially esteemed in the French literary tradition—clarity of focus, lucidity in exposition and narration, definite design, and mastery of technical detail. In the poem as a whole—even in our abridgment of a part—scale and proportion are evident. The succession of quarrels, treachery, and battles is only the raw material out of which the poet has built a highly wrought work of art. The emphasis on action—on what Roland, Ganelon, and Olivier do and say—has been recognized since Aristotle as the right method for a poet. But mere action is the formula of the adventure story. The great-literature standard requires that the action have significance. This significance the author of the *Roland* has provided in rich and ordered variety. The acts of the hero, of his friend, and of his foe are presented as part of the total character of each; they grow out of the whole man, including his temperament and personality. But they are also presented against an ethical and social background. Every act, every decision, bears a relation to the feudal code of conduct, of right and wrong, and hence is an indication of human good or evil. Courage rather than cowardice, loyalty rather than treachery, judgment rather than folly—a belief in these criteria is implicit or explicit in the presentation of each action. And they apply to the outermost frame within which the poet has placed the specific events of the narrative—the contest between Christianity and paganism. For

to the author and his audience the Christian cause is just, the Saracen, unjust. Roland, fighting for the crusading Emperor, is *right*; Ganelon, aiding the heathen enemy against his brother-in-arms, is doubly *wrong*.

The man who brings about the death of Roland and twenty thousand Franks is no mean and petty villain. The husband of the Emperor's sister and the stepfather of Roland, he holds a very high place in Charles's council. Nor does he lack the ability or the personality to sustain this position. He has no hesitation in speaking against Roland in the first discussion of the Saracen proposals; his nomination as envoy to King Marsil is readily accepted by Charles; and his success in his treachery is a brilliant feat. For in order to accomplish it he must first provoke the now peacefully inclined Marsil to wrath and then turn this anger against Roland. To this end he takes a calculated risk for the sake of a calculated—but far from guaranteed—result. Insulting Marsil deliberately, in the name of the Emperor, he makes himself the first target of the Saracen king's fury and definitely endangers his own life. Luckily for him, the king's hand is stayed; and the Saracen nobles applaud Ganelon's magnificent courage. The rest is comparatively easy—though everything now depends on Ganelon's success in getting Roland placed in command of the rear guard. That he succeeds is the more credible because it was Roland who previously nominated Ganelon for the embassy: Roland and Charles may be ex-



pected to act, as in fact they do, on the principle that turn about is fair play.

To the twelfth-century poet and his audience of proud knights the question of motive in Ganelon's hatred of Roland doubtless presented little difficulty. Indeed, if Ganelon had not resorted to treason, a tenable defense of his attitude could be established. For it may well be that he is honestly opposed to the policy of relentless war against the Saracens. His speech at the first council, urging acceptance of Marsil's proposals, wins the support of the wise counselor Naimcs, and carries the day. An advocate of peace would obviously regard the uncompromising spokesman of the war party—Roland—as his opponent. Later, talking with the Saracen envoy Blacandrin, Ganelon plausibly represents Roland as the chief obstacle to pacific relations between the two peoples. To be sure, Ganelon is now plotting against Roland; but that should not blind us to the possibility that he honestly differs with Roland about this question of the Emperor's foreign policy. When we have said this, and when we have recognized the faults in Roland's personality that might normally vex another powerful, but less powerful, courtier, we have said all that can be said in defense of Ganelon. His acts put him quite beyond the possibility of moral justification. But justifying him is one thing; understanding him is quite another, and this the author has enabled us to do.

In Roland the poet has cre-

ated one of the great heroes of European literature. Like Achilles, Aeneas, and Hamlet, he is the embodiment of a definite ideal of humanity. The ideal that Roland incarnates is that of feudal chivalry. Roland exhibits in superlative degree the traits and attitudes which feudal society and institutions sought to produce in a whole class. He is a supremely valiant fighter, a completely faithful vassal, and a warmly affectionate friend; and, since his creator lived in the early twelfth century, his fervent Christianity bears the Crusader's stamp. His words to his friend Olivier before the battle epitomize his vocation as he sees it:

For his lord the vassal bears heat  
and cold,

Toil and peril endures for him,  
Risks in his service both life and  
limb.

For mighty blows let our arms  
be strung,

Lest songs of scorn be against  
us sung.

With the Christian is good, with  
the heathen ill:

No dastard part shall ye see me  
fill.

This is the code of a man of action, of one to whom action appears as duty. Neither here nor elsewhere in the poem is Roland touched by any sense of the *lacrimae rerum*, and of the "doubtful doom of human kind" that haunts Aeneas. Nor has he ever dreamt of most of the things in Hamlet's philosophy. In assurance and self-reliance he is much closer to Achilles, except that Achilles fought essentially for himself—certainly not

for Agamemnon! In Roland the man is wholly assimilated to the vassal. The ceiling above him is lower, the pattern he follows is more limited, than those of Achilles, Aeneas, and Hamlet; yet within his pattern Roland achieves perfection, as they do in theirs.

Roland's feats in battle require no analysis; they are bright and glorious; they outshine the great deeds of his noble comrades. This superiority is no more than the poet has led us to expect. It is the hero's weakness—weakness counterpoised to his greatness—that gives the poem depth and produces the tension that commands our interest. Roland's defect has been called the excess of his special virtue—confidence, courage, bravery; if assurance outstrips prudence, then bravery becomes recklessness, which can bring disaster upon the hero and those for whom he is responsible. The author carefully shows us that Roland has no habit or instinct of caution to match his marvelous courage. Charles notes the vindictive manner in which Ganelon proposes Roland for the rear guard, and though at a loss to divine its meaning, is moved to assign half his entire army to Roland. But Roland either has not noticed the gleam of triumph in Ganelon's eye, or, if he has, loftily disregards it and firmly refuses to take more than twenty thousand men, a relatively small force.

So far Roland has done nothing definitely wrong, though he has revealed a certain lack of perception and of intuitive prudence. But he does do wrong

when, surprised by an army of a hundred thousand Saracens, he refuses to blow the horn that would summon Charles to the rescue. The error is emphasized by the repetition in Olivier's effort to persuade him, and the relationship between Roland's refusal and his rashness of character is made apparent both through his answers and through the contrast with Olivier. Roland fears that asking for help would make him look foolish among the Franks—instead, he will slay the foe himself; he will not leave his kin at home open to reproach because of him; if, as Olivier says, the rear guard is hopelessly outnumbered, then death is better than disgrace. Actually, Roland is confident of victory despite the odds. His judgment is not equal to his daring. As the poet sums it up, "Roland is daring and Olivier wise."

Hence catastrophe ensues. But it is catastrophe redeemed by glorious heroism, as well as self-sacrificing penitence. When, despite tremendous exploits by the Franks, especially by Roland, all but a handful of the rear guard have been slain, Roland wishes to sound the horn to let the Emperor know what has happened. But now Olivier dissents on the ground of honor: Roland had refused to summon Charles to a rescue, and it would be shameful to summon him now only to witness a disaster. The repetitions in this scene balance those of the earlier one. Though the question is decided by Archbishop Turpin, the argument has embittered Olivier against Roland. Hence it is that when, blinded by his own blood, Olivier

later strikes Roland, his comrade has to ask whether the blow was intentional. Roland's humility here is a part of his penitence, a penitence never put into words but sublimely revealed in deeds. Exhausted by battle as he is, his superhuman and repeated blasts on the horn burst his temples. The angels and archangels who receive his soul in Paradise are functional symbols of his final triumph in defeat. The poet does not remit the penalty of Roland's error, which is paid by his death. But his victory combines an epic with a tragic conclusion; atonement and redemption, not merely death, is the end, as it is in another profoundly Christian poem of action, Milton's *Samson Agonistes*.

#### THE STORY OF AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE

*Aucassin and Nicolette* (*Aucassin et Nicolette*) is perhaps the most charming literary work of the entire Middle Ages. Its author is unknown, but it is written in the language in use in northern France in the twelfth century or thereabouts. The alternation of prose and verse in *Aucassin* is somewhat unusual; perhaps the prose passages were intended to be read aloud or recited and the poems sung by an entertainer, amateur or professional. It has been suggested that the work belonged to the repertory of a company or pair of traveling minstrels, who performed or acted it much as a play. If this was the case, it must have been presented in places like the castle of Count Garin de Beaucaire in the story, for there was apparently no secular

theater—or opera—during the Middle Ages.

The remarkable achievement of *Aucassin* is the masterly use of familiar elements of diverse kinds to produce a unique result. A wide variety of incidents, motifs, and themes has been woven into a unified pattern designed and sustained with precision. It *partly* resembles several of the recognized types of narrative: the folk tale, the romance, the adventure story; and it recalls a number of familiar themes: the love of prince and pauper, the child of royalty in disguise, the conversion of the heathen. The repetition of statements in nearly identical phrasing, especially in the dialogue of the early prose sections, offers the assurance and the emphasis that repetition provides in the fairy tale. And the beauty of *Nicolette* is so surpassing that we may be tempted to suspect that she is a supernatural creature—until we find the ignorant shepherds making exactly that mistake. The escapes, the traveling to strange lands, the separation by capture and shipwreck, the hardships, all these are the materials of the *romans d'aventure* (tales of adventure). But here they are handled with a brevity and deftness that make them incidental to the central theme; vivid or comic, strange or poignant, none of them delays us long. Nor do the other motifs, mentioned above, ever dominate the narrative or determine the real structure of the work.

*Aucassin and Nicolette* is, of course, a love story. But the treatment differs considerably from that customary in the

*romans d'amour* (tales of love). In these the lady is often hostile, at least ostensibly, or, at best, unaware of her lover's pangs; she has to be won; frequently she is capricious and gives her knight a hard time—he must conquer the lady's affection as well as the numerous and wearying external obstacles that keep them apart. But Nicolette is as much in love as Aucassin, and more ingenious and enterprising; both are utterly candid, direct, and steadily devoted to each other. The specific dangers and the devices employed to elude them, the castles, dungeons, escapes by a window into a garden and through a moat—these are traditional. But the atmosphere in which they are related is not: the warm night of early summer, saturated with moonlight and nightingales, the lyric joy of the two lovers. The work is built, by rigid selection, from elements of the real life of the time, a time when there actually were moats, dungeons, sentinels, parental authority, chattel slaves, fierce counts carrying on private wars—not to insist on Saracens or uncouth shepherds in the woodland. Hence, perhaps, the freshness and spontaneity, the naturally springing gaiety and joy. Hence, too, the stress, without impairment of tone, on the picturesque and the humorous in a world from which the processes of moral judgment have been largely expunged. Action is straightforward and decisive. At one point Aucassin is taken prisoner by his father's enemies before he realizes what has happened; when he becomes aware of his situation, he lays about

him manfully, captures the enemy count, and so puts an end to a twenty years' war! The same absoluteness and directness are expressed in Aucassin's famous reply to the viscount of the town, who warns him that he may be sent to hell for loving Nicolette. He wants to go there, says Aucassin, along with the lively knights, the gay, sweet ladies, and the musicians and poets; that is, he belongs with those who take delight in the joys and beauties of human life. A heaven filled with the ugly, the weak, the miserable, and those who deny nature in the name of religion would not suit him at all. This is exuberance, of course, not atheism; the extravagance of Aucassin's words is a part of his character and a feature of his world.

The work is a kind of gospel of the religion of love, a religion that exacts a complete devotion and bestows a complete happiness. Yet there is some question about the tone which the author intended to give it for *his* day and generation. Precisely because motivation and action are so absolute, so neat, and so pat, some modern students of medieval French literature believe that it is a parody or satire. They may well be right. But the modern reader, unburdened by lengthy metrical romances of chivalric adventure and courtly love conducted by means of stereotyped characters and formula situations, need not worry too much about the question. *Aucassin and Nicolette* is a delight whether regarded simply as a story or as a vehicle for literary satire.

## "OUR LADY'S TUMBLER"

One of the great creative and spiritual forces of the "high Middle Ages," the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was the devotion to the Virgin Mary. Her life on earth and in heaven was the subject of innumerable works of art—paintings, poems, stained-glass windows. Some of the finest hymns of the Church were centered upon her, the "Ave, maris stella" and the "Stabat mater," for instance. Great cathedrals were dedicated to her—all the "Notre Dame" churches of Europe, Paris and Chartres among them, are hers. But her maternal figure touched the life of the individual man and woman in a still more intimate way. She was the merciful and patient friend of man; she interceded for him with her divine Son and with the Father. She, the Queen of Heaven, was man's advocate with God. Many a humble-spirited Christian felt that he could approach the Deity only through her kind and womanly mediation.

This was the background from which arose stories like "Our Lady's Tumbler." They are called Miracles of Our Lady, and each tells of some special kindness shown by Mary to a pious, penitent, or devout man or woman. Our story reveals a vocation of holiness in a very unlikely person and tells of the even more surprising way in which this vocation was fulfilled.

Any man in the medieval centuries, like any man today, might, of course, grow weary of the world. In the Middle Ages he was then likely to enter a

monastery and become a monk. The tumbler in our story has made such a decision—without stopping to determine whether he is fitted for the mode of life he has chosen. He is a skillful and trained acrobat and dancer, still at the height of his powers; but, like most medieval acrobats, he has never learned to read and write. Hence he is unable to chant the hymns and litanies which divide—and fill—the day and night for the rest of the monks. The discovery of his apparent unfitness is a great shock. He prays fervently to Mary for help. Then, wandering about the church, he finds himself near an altar above which is an image of Mary. The bell sounding for Mass suddenly inspires him with a possible answer to his difficulty.

Perhaps we can best appraise the tumbler by considering the things he might have done. He could, for instance, have asked to be taught to read and write; this would have involved a long delay. Or he might have submitted himself entirely to menial work in the monastery. The humility of either of these courses would doubtless have been a virtue; for many, one of them was probably the right solution. But these alternatives simply do not occur to the tumbler. He is, first and foremost—and wholly, no doubt, as he sees himself—an acrobat.

So he will be an acrobat for Mary. The remarkable thing about his decision is its combination of unconscious self-confidence with quite genuine humility. At one and the same moment he offers himself with

professional pride as Mary's "gleeman," or entertainer, yet is distressed by the thought that he may not be able to please her. But he throws himself into the effort with tremendous exertion. Though the sweat pours from him he keeps on.

Finally, Mary comes—from above the altar and from heaven—to fan and cool her exhausted acrobat. But it is not he who sees her; it is the abbot and another monk. Hence the appearance of Mary is no hallucination of the tumbler; overcome by his exertions, he is not even aware of it. She has come, attended by angels, to reward and give recognition to his devotion. Its completeness and its purity—as an act of love—raise him to the plane of saintliness; or, rather, the quality of his love and service reveals the holiness of his soul.

#### DANTE, *THE DIVINE COMEDY*

The greatest poem of the Middle Ages, called by its author a comedy and designated by later centuries the *Divine Comedy* (*Divina commedia*), was written in the early fourteenth century. The poet, Dante Alighieri, born in Florence in 1265, was exiled from his native city in 1302 for political reasons and died at Ravenna in 1321. The poem is in many ways both the supreme and the centrally representative expression of medieval man in imaginative literature. But to appreciate the poem adequately in this light a reader must know it in its entirety. The present volume contains just a fourth of the total

work, which is an organic whole designed with the utmost symmetry. Hence it will be best to look rapidly at the general plan and then concentrate on the part of the poem presented in this book.

The three great divisions of the poem, *Hell* (*Inferno*), *Purgatory* (*Purgatorio*), and *Paradise* (*Paradiso*) are of identical length; each of the last two has thirty-three cantos, and the first, the *Hell*, has thirty-four; but the opening canto is a prologue to the entire poem. The total, one hundred, is the square of ten, regarded in the thought of the time as a perfect number. The three divisions correspond in number to the Trinity. Nine, the square of three, figures centrally in the interior structure of each of the three divisions. In *Hell*, the lost souls are arranged in three main groups, and occupy nine circles. Most of the circles are themselves subdivided. *Hell* itself is a funnel-shaped opening in the earth extending from the surface to the center. Dante's journey thus takes him steadily downward through the nine concentric circles. The progression is from the least to the greatest types of evil; all the souls are irrevocably condemned, but all are not intrinsically equal in the degree or nature of their sinfulness. Thus, as we follow Dante in his descent, we find first an ante-*Hell*, the abode of those who refused to choose between right and wrong; then the boundary river, Acheron; then a circle for virtuous pagans who knew not Christ; and then a series of circles occupied by those guilty of sins of self-indulgence,

or Incontinence, of all kinds. These include the illicit lovers, the gluttons, the hoarders and spendthrifts, and those of violent or sullen disposition. Comparable classes and subclasses are found within the other two main groups of sinners, those guilty respectively of Violence and of Fraud, the latter including treachery and treason. At the bottom is the fallen angel, Satan, or Lucifer.

Purgatory is situated on a lofty mountain rising on an island in the sea. It is divided into the ante-Purgatory, which is the lower half of the mountain; Purgatory proper, just above; and the Earthly Paradise, or Garden of Eden, at the summit. Purgatory proper is arranged in a series of seven ledges encircling the mountain, each devoted to the purification of souls from particular kinds of sinful disposition—Pride, Envy, Anger, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony, and Illicit Love. These seven divisions, plus the ante-Purgatory and the Earthly Paradise, make a total of nine.

The *Paradise* takes us, in ascending order, through the circles of the seven planets of medieval astronomy, the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn; then through the circles of the fixed stars and the *primum mobile*, or outermost circle, which moves the others; and finally to the Empyrean, or Heaven itself, the abode of God, the angels, and the redeemed souls. Again we have nine circles, besides the Empyrean, inclusion of which would give a total of ten. Such is the vast design and scope of the

*Divine Comedy* as a whole. Our partial reading can give us some representative and illustrative experience of its execution in some of its parts.

The poem itself begins with action, not outline; explanations come along in suitable places; they are a part of the traveler's experience. We shall do well to follow the hint. The incidents recounted in Canto I of the *Inferno* are concrete and definite; their literal meaning is perfectly plain. As critics have often said, Dante is a highly visual poet; he gives us clear pictures or images. Beginning with a man lost in a wood, hindered by three beasts from escape by his own effort, the canto might well be the start of a tale of unusual but quite earthly adventures. But when the stranger Dante meets identifies himself as the shade of the poet Virgil and offers to conduct him through realms which, though not named, can only be Hell and Purgatory, we realize that there is a meaning beyond the one which appears on the surface. We recognize that the wood, the mountain, the sun, and the three beasts, though casually introduced, are not casual features of the scene. They represent something other than themselves; they are symbols. In the light of the entire poem, it is usually possible to tell what these other things are, and in this volume the headnotes and footnotes identify them. Occasionally, however, there is doubt. What do the three beasts stand for? The headnote and the footnote pre-

sent the different identifications made by two different students of the poem. This lack of certainty is not a serious disadvantage to the reader; he should regard it as a challenge to reach a correct decision for himself. Indeed, if he goes on to read the entire poem, he may arrive at an identification that seems sounder and more consistent with the work as a whole than either of those proposed. Meanwhile, there is no ambiguity about the animals themselves; they are the satisfying and specific images of poetry.

The simple style of this first canto may surprise the reader who has been told that the *Divine Comedy* is one of the five or six great poems of European literature, especially if he assumes that it will sound like an epic. For Dante begins with neither the splendor of Homer nor the stateliness of Virgil nor the grandeur of Milton. Indeed, except for the use of verse, Canto I seems more like a narrative by Defoe or Swift, particularly at the outset. It is quiet, factual, economical; it convinces us by its air of serious simplicity. Dante called the poem a comedy, in accordance with the use of the term in his day, not only because it began in misery and ended in happiness, but also because in that literary form a sustained loftiness of style was not requisite. In other words, he is free to use the whole range of style, from the humblest, including the colloquial and the humorous, to the highest. There is, indeed, a great variety of tone in the poem. Yet the reader will doubtless eventually agree that

Dante strikes the right note for *him* at the beginning. Variation will result chiefly from change in intensity, achieved by differing degrees of concentration and repetition—rather than from a shift to the “grand style.” This unpretentious manner is, we see, most suitable to a prolonged work of serious fiction in which the author is the central character. For the *Divine Comedy* is not primarily a Cook’s tour of the world of the dead; it is an account of the effect of such a journey on the man who takes it—Dante. It is a record of his moral and spiritual experience of illumination, regeneration, and beatitude. We are interested partly because of the unique and individual character of the traveler—Dante as the man he was, the man revealed in the poem—and partly because the experience of the author is imaginatively available and meaningful to all of us.

In Canto IV we come to the first of the nine concentric circles of Hell. Here are the noble heroes, wise philosophers, and inspired poets of the ancient—and medieval—pagan world. They are excluded from Heaven because they knew nothing of Christ and His religion. This fate may seem harsh to us, but the orthodox view recognized only one gate to Heaven. These spirits suffer no punishment, Virgil (who is one of them) tells Dante, only “without hope we languish in suspense.” Here Dante’s fervent pity and sympathy at once nourish and mirror the reader’s; but there is no rebellion against God’s decree. Further explanation, and thereby



justification, in Dante's view, will come as the poem progresses toward its goal.

With Canto V we reach the second circle, the first of those containing souls guilty of active sin unrepented at the time of death, and hence suffering a penalty in Hell. Here, therefore, is found the contemptuous and monstrous judge Minos, another figure taken from classical myth and freely adapted to Dante's purposes. The souls assigned to the second circle are those guilty of unlawful love. The poet's method here, as throughout the journey, is first to point out a number of prominent figures who would be familiar to his fourteenth-century readers, and then to concentrate attention on a very few, one or two in each circle, telling more about them, and eliciting his own story from each. In general, Dante lets the place and condition in which the sinners are found serve as a minimum essential of information. For the penalties in the various circles are of many different kinds. Their fundamental characteristic is appropriateness to the particular sin; this is one of the principal differences between the punishments in Dante's Hell and the miscellaneous and arbitrary horrors of many accounts of the place. In Dante the penalties symbolize the sin. Thus the illicit lovers of the second circle are continually blown about by storm winds; their suffering is one aspect of the sin itself. For the sin consisted in the surrender of reason to lawless passions.

Here we find Paolo and

Francesca, the best-known figures of the entire *Divine Comedy*. Like all the human beings presented in the poem, they actually existed. They lived in Italy about the time of Dante's childhood and early youth, and were slain by Francesca's husband, a brother of Paolo. Dante's method, it is hence clear, is not to build up an allegorical cast of personified abstractions. Instead of, say, Passion and Rebellion, he portrays Paolo and Francesca. They represent, or symbolize, sinful love by example. They show how an intrinsically noble emotion, love, if contrary to God's law, can bring two essentially fine persons to damnation and spiritual ruin. The tenderness and the sympathy with which the story is told are famous. But its pathos, and Dante's personal response of overwhelming pity, should not blind us to the justice of the penalty. The poet who describes himself as fainting at the end of Francesca's recital is the same man who consigned her to Hell. His purpose is partly to portray the attractiveness of sin, an especially congenial theme when *this* is the sin involved—both for Dante and for most readers. But although Dante allows the lovers the bitter sweetness of inseparability in Hell, the modern "romantic" idea that union anywhere is sufficient happiness for lovers does not even occur to him. Paolo and Francesca indeed have their love; but they have lost God and thus corrupted their personalities—their inmost selves—from order into anarchy; they are the reverse of happy. In a sense, they have

what they wanted, they continue in the lawless condition which they chose on earth. But that condition, seen from the point of view of eternity, is not bliss; it is, in effect, Hell.

In Canto X we are among the heretics in their flaming tomb in the sixth circle. Situated within the walled city of Dis—the capital, as it were, of Hell—this circle is a kind of border between the upper Hell (devoted to punishments for Incontinence) and the lower (concerned with Violence and Fraud). Here Dante portrays the proud aristocrat Farinata and his associate, the elder Cavalcante, father of Dante's closest friend. Their crime is heresy, a flagrant aspect of intellectual pride. But there is a nobility in Farinata's pride; Dante, like the reader, admires the splendid self-sufficiency of a man who, in this situation, can look "As if of Hell he had a great disdain." And the essence of the aristocratic nature is distilled in his address to Dante as "with a kind / Of scorn he questioned: 'Who were thy forebears?'" and in his abrupt resumption of the conversation interrupted by Cavalcante. Alongside the haughtiness of Farinata, Dante sets the pathetic—and mistaken—grief of Cavalcante for his son; each portrait gains in effect by the extreme contrast.

Canto XIII shows us one group of those guilty of Violence; for the suicides have been violent against themselves. Here they are turned into monstrous trees, their misery finding expression when a bough is

plucked. In the eyes of the Church, suicide was murder, in no way diminished by the fact that the slayer and the victim were the same. By representing in Pier delle Vigne a man who had every human motive to end his life, Dante achieves the deepest pathos and evokes our shuddering pity. As Francesca displays in her dramatic monologue the charm and the potential weakness of her character, as Farinata's manner of speech portrays his nature, so Pier delle Vigne by his exact and legal-sounding language lets us see the careful, methodical counselor whose sense of logic and sense of justice were so outraged that he saw no point in enduring life any longer. His judgment is still unimpaired; he does not reproach his king, only the jealous courtiers who misled him. The Wood of the Suicides is one of the greatest—among many admirable—examples of landscape in Hell assimilated to theme and situation.

Canto XV describes the meeting of Dante and his venerable teacher and adviser, the scholar Brunetto Latini. We are in another ring of the seventh circle, among more of those who have sinned through Violence. The impact of this scene results from the contrast between the dignity of the man and the indignity of his condition in Hell, and by the tact with which both he and Dante ignore it for the moment. Brunetto, with the others guilty of homosexual vice, must move continually along a sandy desert under a shower of fiery flakes. Dante accords him the utmost respect and expresses

his gratitude in the warmest terms; and something like their earthly relationship of teacher and pupil is re-enacted, for Brunetto is keenly interested in Dante's prospects in life. In the final image of Brunetto running, not like the loser, but like the winner of a race, Dante extracts dignity and victory out of indignity itself.

The presence of people like those we have been reviewing will remind the reader that Hell is not reserved exclusively for arrant ruffians, hoodlums, and scoundrels. They are there, of course; but so are many "nice," many charming, and some noble and great, men and women. These are in Hell because they preferred something else—no matter what—to God; at the moment of death they were therefore in rebellion against Him. God and Heaven would not be congenial to them, *as they are and as He is*; and there is no acceptable repentance after death. Hence they go on unchanged—only now experiencing the harsher aspects of the sin in which they chose to live.

Cantos XXVI and XXVII take us among the wicked counselors, who occupy the eighth chasm, or subdivision, of the eighth circle. Appearing at a distance like fireflies in a summer valley, these souls are wrapped in individual, or occasionally twin, flames. Fire is a fit punishment for those who used the flame of intellect to accomplish evil. When the two poets approach more closely, Virgil identifies one flame as that of Ulysses (Odysseus) and Diomed, who burn together.

Among the deceptions devised by Ulysses was the wooden horse, which made possible the capture of Troy. It will strike the reader as strange that a man should suffer for his powers as a military tactician. But the Greeks were enemies of the Trojans, whom the Romans and later most of the nations of Western Europe regarded as their ancestors. Ulysses was on the wrong side, and was responsible for his deeds; but Dante mingles with his condemnation an admiration of the man's mental powers. Ulysses remains aloof; he does not converse with Dante, like most of the souls we have met. Instead, as Dorothy Sayers puts it in the notes to her translation of the poem, Virgil conjures the flame into monologue. Thus we are told how Ulysses determined not to return home after the Trojan War, but to explore the western ocean instead. In this narrative, apparently invented by Dante, Ulysses becomes the type of the adventuring and searching spirit of man; the voyage is an act of the mind and soul as well as the body. When he has sailed within sight of a mountainous island, his ship is wrecked by a storm and he perishes. Since, as other parts of the poem indicate, this is the island of Purgatory, the episode clearly has symbolic significance. On this island is the Earthly Paradise, or Garden of Eden, lost to man by the sin of Adam. Man, unassisted by divine grace—pagan man, represented by Ulysses—cannot regain it by his own intelligence, although the effort toward that end is noble in itself.

The other evil counselor, Guido da Montefeltro, talks fluently in Canto XXVII; he shows a quite earthly cagerness for news, crafty, garrulous old intriguer that he is. It is a neat irony that, in spite of his deserved reputation for cleverness, Dante shows him twice deceived: first on earth, as he himself relates, and now in hell—he does not want his story known and is convinced that Dante will never return to earth to tell it. He sketches in detail, with recollective acidity, the steps by which the Pope led him, an aging and reformed man, to return for a moment to his old ways. He even includes the contest of St. Francis and the devil for his soul at his death, along with the devil's bitter witticism: you didn't think I was a logician, perhaps!

In Cantos XXXII and XXXIII we have reached the ninth and last circle, where the traitors are immersed in ice that symbolizes their unfeeling hearts. At the end of one canto we are shown the horror of Ugolino gnawing the skull of his enemy Ruggieri, both partly fastened in the ice. Dante does not concentrate on the acts which have put either man in hell. Instead he lets Ugolino tell us, in the next canto, why his hatred of Ruggieri is so implacable. The fearful pathos, the power, and at the same time the restraint and compression of this narrative make it one of the finest episodes in the poem.

The last canto, Canto XXXIV, shows us the enormous shape of the fallen angel, Satan, fixed at the bottom of Hell,

where the motion of his wings freezes the ice in which we have found the traitors immersed. In one of his three mouths he holds Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ; in the other two are Brutus and Cassius, who plotted the assassination of Julius Caesar. Dante did not regard them, as we generally do today, as perhaps misguided patriots; to him they were the destroyers of a providentially ordained ruler. Readers who remember Milton's *Paradise Lost* may be surprised at the absence of any interior presentation of Satan. One critic regrets that his suffering is not shown as different from that of the other inhabitants of Hell. But the fact is that his suffering is not presented at all; he is not a person, to Dante, but an object, a part of the machinery and geography of Hell. For the *Divine Comedy* is occupied exclusively with human sin, human redemption, and human beatitude.

## ii

At the beginning of the *Purgatory*, Dante and Virgil have once more reached the surface of the earth and can look up and see the sky and the stars. Their long climb from the bottom of Hell, where they left Satan, has brought them out on the shore of the mountain-island of Purgatory. The scene and the situation are presented by Dante with a bold and happy use of imaginative symbols. Guided by Reason in the person of Virgil, Dante, a man still in the earthly life, has looked closely at sin and evil—in Hell—and turned away from them, and is now in

search of the means of self-correction and purification. He arrives on the island shore, just before dawn, to find the reverend figure of Cato acting as guardian of the mountain. The austere glorious figure of Cato, his face illumined by rays from stars representing the pagan virtues of Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice, embodies the highest moral and ethical ideal available to man without divine revelation, pre- or post-Christian. Dante meets him, appropriately, before dawn—before the sun of God's illumination has risen. These elements in the situation, together with the reference to his sojourn with Marcia, his wife, in the circle of virtuous pagans in Hell, make Cato a remarkable transition or border symbol, standing both between Hell and Purgatory and between Greco-Roman philosophy and ethics and the dispensation of the Old and New Testaments.

These opening cantos admirably set quite a new tone in the second great division of the poem. They show us joy and brightness, cheer and hope, contrasting totally with the darkness and misery of Hell. They show us an angel arriving with a cargo of souls, all joyfully singing. They accustom us to a different set of attitudes, a different kind of people, and especially, they portray the naïveté, the almost childlike lack of intellectual and moral sophistication, the need of orientation, which characterize the penitent soul at this point in its progress to perfection. As yet uninstructed and spiritually immature, it looks back, seeking to carry on the

harmless but no longer suitable delights of earthly life. Dante—and Virgil—share this simplicity to the full.

Cantos III-XVIII, not included in this book, take the reader along the slopes of the lower half of the mountain—the ante-Purgatory, where some of the souls must wait for varying periods of time (and for different reasons) before entering Purgatory itself—and through four of the seven terraces, those devoted to purgation from Pride, Envy, Anger, and Sloth. In Canto XIX we go on to the fifth of the ledges encircling the mountain, that in which the souls are purified of Avarice. There we meet Pope Adrian, one of Dante's most vivid illustrations of the anguish of purification. Concisely he sketches for Dante the poignant story of his late conversion (to the reality of the Christian life), his repentance, and his present hard penance. Only when, after a life of self-seeking, he had attained the pinnacle of the papacy did disillusionment come—and spiritual discovery: "I saw that there the heart no peace could claim." Now he recognizes the equity of the reforming penalty:

Even as our eyes on high we  
would not send,  
Which only upon earthly  
things were cast,  
So here to earth Justice hath  
forced them bend.

Dante, on learning from Adrian's words that he was a pope, has knelt down in respect. But Adrian, perceiving this without lifting his eyes from the ground, peremptorily corrects

Dante: there are no popes here. All the hierarchies and social orders of earth are annihilated in Purgatory—and, we may add, the hierarchy of Heaven is not that of earth. Having answered Dante's questions, Adrian bids him go on—he hinders the task of penitence. Finally, remembering that Dante had offered to carry news of him to those possibly dear to him on earth, which might lead to helpful prayers, the old man adds that he has only a niece there who, if not corrupted by the bad example of his family, could possibly help him. But for this soul, absorbed in his penance, the earth has receded far away, and Heaven is not yet attained; he is essentially alone with his suffering.

The remaining parts of the *Purgatory* included in this book, Cantos XXVII, XXX, and XXXI, add a dimension to Dante's rôle in the poem. He is, as has been said, the protagonist throughout; the journey and all its disclosures are carried out for his benefit. In Hell, to be sure, he could do little except look and learn; yet his emotional education through the revelation of perfected evil was a large and positive achievement. As a candidate for salvation, he has learned to abhor sin more completely in proportion as he has been shown its real nature; while, as a man of flesh and blood, he has felt alternate pity and hate for the sinners. Along the penitential ledges of Purgatory he has partially assimilated himself to the penitents; he has felt humility while among those purging themselves of Pride, and generosity among

those seeking to root out Envy from their natures. On the seventh terrace, he has recognized an even closer kinship with those engaged in refining their love by fire. But now this same fire, it develops, is the boundary between Purgatory and the Earthly Paradise at the top of the mountain. To reach that goal, Dante must go through the fire. Remembering "Men's bodies burning, once beheld," he is overcome by a terrible fear. The encouraging words of the angel guardian of the ledge, the assurances of Virgil, who reminds him of perils safely passed—neither avail to move him until he is told that Beatrice is beyond the wall of flame. Then his resistance melts and he perseveres through the frightful but harmless fire. It is now nearly sunset, when all ascent ceases, but next morning Dante takes the few last steps to the Earthly Paradise. Here Virgil, who has guided him through Hell and Purgatory, gives him a farewell benediction. Dante, says Virgil, has explored evil in its final effects (in Hell) and the means of correcting the human inclinations that produce it (in Purgatory). His regenerated will is now truly free, and he may fearlessly follow its direction. He no longer needs the guidance of a teacher of morality (Virgil) nor a political structure ("crown") nor an ecclesiastical institution ("mitre"). In short, he has regained the condition of man before the Fall.

These words apply to Dante in his rôle as a kind of Everyman, representing whoever has

fully discerned the nature of evil and wholly freed himself from the impulses to sin. They apply to every soul when it completes the experience of Purgatory; if they did not, the soul would not be ready to go to Heaven, to enter the presence of God. But obviously they cannot apply, actually and practically, to any man still living on earth. That they were not meant as a literal description of Dante the Italian poet and political exile from Florence is clear enough from the events of Cantos XXX and XXXI. For if Dante has already perfected himself by penance, why should he now, in the scenes with Beatrice, repeat the painful experience of rebuke, confession, and satisfaction? It is this latter series of incidents that constitutes Dante's personal, individual experience of correction and purification.

In the midst of the celestial pageant that moves before Dante in the Earthly Paradise appears a lady whom he instantly recognizes as one who was the object of his idealizing love when she lived as a woman on earth. Turning excitedly to confide this to Virgil, he cannot find him anywhere, and is stricken with grief. Presently the lady names herself as Beatrice—whom the reader will remember for two reasons: she sent Virgil to guide her endangered servant, Dante, through Hell and Purgatory; and to see her Dante forced himself to go through the barrier of fire. There is no cause to doubt that, like the other human beings in the poem, Beatrice is an actual person transformed by the shaping imagina-

tion of the poet. What she was to Dante in her earthly life he tells us in the *New Life* (*Vita nuova*), written not long after her death in 1290. She was an incarnation of beauty and virtue; simply by existing, she engrossed the young Dante's ardent but remote devotion; her smile or greeting left him in trembling rapture. This was the full extent of the relationship between them. But the poems in the *New Life* are mostly inspired by the thought of her, whether on earth or in heaven. In short, she was a real woman who, even in this world, was an ideal for Dante, and after death became an even more glorious image of goodness and divine wisdom. The last section of the *New Life* records Dante's resolution to devote a great work to her, when he shall be qualified to achieve it; the *Divine Comedy* is that work. We have seen that he makes her the instigator of the imaginary journey through two realms of the life after death and the motive for his endurance of the fire. Now, as successor to Virgil, she comes to guide him herself through the heavenly paradise. In the same way that Virgil is Reason without ceasing to be Virgil, Beatrice fulfills the rôle of Divine Revelation without ceasing to be Beatrice.

It is in this dual character, part beloved woman and part the voice of divine wisdom, that Beatrice, in Canto XXXI, unsparingly rebukes Dante. He had loved her mortal beauty as an image of the immortal; when death destroyed it, his devotion ought thenceforth to have fixed

itself on the immortal and indestructible virtue of which that beauty had been the image. Instead, he turned aside to the lure of material things. Dante accepts the reproach with the utmost contrition. It is quite probable that this episode is based on some actual lapse, in Dante's life, from his highest moral ideal. These passages, then, recount his own personal experience of purgation, the autobiographical analogue of the penitence and purification portrayed on the mountain as a whole.

Like the invocations of *Paradise Lost*, that with which Dante begins the third division of his poem expresses his sense of the loftiness of the theme. Like Milton, he is venturing things unattempted hitherto in prose or rhyme. The three invocations of the *Divine Comedy* are incremental; the first (in Canto II of the *Hell*) is brief and unobtrusive, the second (in Canto I of the *Purgatory*) more extended, and the third (in Canto I of the *Paradise*) by its earnestness and solemnity indicates the epic stature, though not epic form, which he expects the poem to attain. The *Paradise* offers us an imagined experience of the entire celestial universe as it was charted by medieval astronomy. In that cosmology, the sun, the moon, and the rest, though immensely distant, had not retreated from the earth according to the scale established by modern knowledge. Dante's world is geocentric; the plan-

etary circles, including those of the sun and moon, revolve about the earth, as does the circle of the stars—as does, in fact, everything except the “real” Heaven, or Empyrean, the abode of God and the saints and angels. The *Paradise* is the chronicle of an ascent from planet to planet, until finally Dante is in the Empyrean itself. In each planet a group of redeemed and perfected souls, come from their proper dwelling in the Empyrean, are present to converse with Dante and his guide, Beatrice. Their successive discussions set forth the essentials of Christian doctrine, along with the fundamental scientific concepts of the time; and they themselves exemplify various kinds and degrees of beatitude. For Dante—and the reader—the experience is educational, morally edifying, and spiritually preparatory for the vision with which the poem ends. In Canto III Dante learns of the hierarchy of souls in Heaven; not all are equal, indeed, no two are identical in bliss; yet each is completely satisfied, fulfilled, and happy—“in His will is perfected our peace.” Piccarda, the not wholly blameless nun who speaks these words, is among the souls encountered in the moon, the group of lowest rank in Heaven. From these we rise to higher and higher kinds of blessed souls, each rejoicing wholly in God in its predestined way and in accordance with its capacity.

When all the cycles of the cosmos have been traversed, we come, in Canto XXXI, to



Heaven itself, the real home of the blessed. Here the souls are arranged in the form of a great white rose; God is at the center—an ineffable brightness—and the souls have the aspect of rows of petals. Here Beatrice, who has set forth the truths of Divine Revelation throughout the journey, goes back to her place in Heaven, and St. Bernard, the great mystic of the twelfth century, becomes Dante's guide, or rather sponsor. For what remains is that Dante should be vouchsafed a vision in which, for an instant, he may see God as He really is—in so far as his human capacity enables him to do so. The last canto, Canto XXXIII, opens with Bernard's prayer to the Virgin Mary for intercession in Dante's behalf—a prayer addressed to the same Mary on whom our tumbler relied as his merciful and kindly advocate with God. There is no religious lyric poetry of greater depth or simplicity or beauty than this prayer; its intimacy, tenderness, and humility are consummate.

To obtain, to endure, such a vision is just within the limit of Dante's powers. It transports him into an utterly different kind of being; it leaves him with the memory of an overpowering but indescribable experience. For of course no mystic can ever reveal the content of his vision; it does not belong to the order of reportable things. Dante can only tell us that he discerned with direct but momentary certitude the identity of God as inclusive of man and of universal love, and that he knew himself

to be at that instant one with Him.

The *Divine Comedy* thus ends both quietly and climactically. For this union with God was the purpose of the entire long and arduous journey. This is the good which St. Thomas Aquinas, and Boethius before him, pointed out as the goal of man, as of the entire creation. But what the philosophers prove, Dante experiences, imaginatively. And we reach both center and summit of the medieval structure of human life in proportion as we can follow the record of that experience.

## BOCCACCIO, DECAMERON

The tales of Boccaccio's *Decameron* (completed about 1353) constitute the greatest achievement of prose fiction in a vernacular language of southern Europe during the medieval centuries. In his round hundred stories the Italian author presents a great variety of people and situations, aptly and often acutely characterized, and abundant dialogue of varying liveliness and realism. Like Chaucer, who wrote his *Canterbury Tales* several decades later, he provides a dramatic framework for his narrations. But his storytellers are not miscellaneous pilgrims traveling to a famous shrine; they are seven young ladies and three young gentlemen who have withdrawn from Florence to the countryside, to escape the Black Death, or plague, of 1348. They engage in gay banter and good-natured raillery; but, as they are all refined and cultivated young people with no occupational

bias or ingrained prejudices, their relationships are polite rather than boisterous and lack the force and depth and vitality of those portrayed in the *Canterbury Tales*. They agree on a plan of storytelling—and adhere to it (with slight changes). Here there is no drunken miller, such as interrupts Chaucer's pilgrims, to upset the seemly orderliness acceptable to gentlefolk, for there are no other folk present. Each member of the company is to tell a tale each day; on some days a general topic is assigned, on others each narrator follows his own taste and judgment.

The story of Federigo and his falcon is told on a day devoted to accounts of love that turns out happily after difficulties on the way. It presents the courtly-love relationship—or one of the possible relationships—in a remarkable combination of realism and nobility. Federigo's conduct perfectly fulfills the code; he devotes himself completely to Monna Giovanna, and his failure to receive any return in no way disturbs the pattern of that devotion. He never repines or complains; his lady's married or widowed condition is all one to him; and, having spent his fortune in the futile effort to attract her, he lives with resignation on his tiny estate. But Federigo is genuinely high-minded and noble; he has absorbed the ideals and not merely the etiquette of courtly love. His declaration, when Giovanna comes to call, that he has gained and not lost by his service to her, might be politeness learned out of a book—a ro-

mance, for example. But his sacrifice of the falcon to provide her with a good meal is a splendid and magnificent folly that could come only from an almost unbelievably generous heart. His grief at the outcome is probably sharper than Giovanna's, despite the painful disappointment which it produces for her.

Giovanna's dignity and charm and sensitivity are as clear to us as they evidently are to Federigo. Unwilling, whether as wife or widow, to have a romance with Federigo, she does not encourage him. Yet she knows that he loves her and that he has squandered his wealth on her account. We see her distress at having to ask him for anything, let alone the falcon, his most cherished possession. But when love for her young son, mortally ill, forces her to it, she acts with grace and decorum. And with something more; for she has discerned the nobleness of temper in Federigo through his consistently courteous behavior. It is that to which she appeals, not to any obligation of a courtly lover to please his lady. Later, when her brothers convince her that she should remarry, she also shows both generosity and independence of character. She gives Federigo his reward by marrying him—and seeing that his new fortune is not wasted! The happy ending is agreeable; but the notable achievement of the story is the brief but complete and poignant depiction of the dilemmas faced by the two against a background of preliminary characterization which gives their decisions full significance.

## CHAUCEER, THE CANTERBURY TALES

### THE GENERAL PROLOGUE

Although the French produced the richest and most influential body of vernacular literature in the Middle Ages, the greatest writers of the period were an Italian, Dante, and an Englishman, Chaucer. The Florentine poet and the Londoner both wrote their most important works in the fourteenth century, the former in its early decades, the latter in its latest. In origin and background, both represent the point of view of the upper middle class or the lesser gentry, groups which were not sharply separated in the urban life of Italy and of London in the later medieval centuries. Both were active in public affairs; both on occasion were envoys of their respective governments. Dante was once responsible for widening a street in Florence, and Chaucer for a time held a post comparable to that of an undersecretary of the interior in the cabinet of the United States. If Dante had sharper political convictions and a greater theoretical interest in the philosophy of government, Chaucer held a wider variety of offices—and held them longer.

Both poets probably lived out their lives as laymen; their view of the world is free from any bias due to a clerical vocation. Yet both were completely orthodox in religion and theology. Dante was severe with heretics and schismatics, and Chaucer was neither a Wycliffite nor a sympathizer with the Peasants' Revolt. With the partial excep-

tion of Dante's insistence on the equal status of the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy, alike providentially sponsored, it may be said that both poets found themselves in harmony with the traditional institutions and patterns of medieval civilization. Both were keenly aware of injustices resulting from abuses of the system; each exposed rascals with enthusiasm—Dante with bitterness, Chaucer with amusement. But their denunciation of wicked rulers and their satire directed against the worldliness of bishops and abbots and the corruptness of friars and pardoners do not show either writer to be a rebel against the established institutions of Church or State. The background against which abuses are portrayed is always, implicitly or explicitly, the ideal pattern for the king or priest or monk—not some utopian or revolutionary social order which would dispense with or radically alter the patterns themselves.

On the ultimate issues of human life, as in these questions of the structure of civilization, the two greatest literary geniuses of the Middle Ages were in agreement with each other and with their fellow men. For each, God was the center of the universe, as man and his earth were the center of the cosmic order. Man's goal was union with God; if he attained it—after this short earthly life—he would spend eternity in heaven; if he missed it, then hell awaited him. For man's direction and guidance toward the good in this life and the next, there were the divinely ordained religion and its

Church, and the divinely approved hierarchy of society on earth. As men of independent intelligence, of education—and of essentially middle-class origin—both Dante and Chaucer insisted that true nobility depends on intrinsic character, not the accident of birth. But the modern conceptions of political, social, and economic equality, and complete religious freedom, would have appeared to them as anarchy. They had fundamental faith in the quite different patterns of institutional hierarchy and authority.

If Dante chose the life after death as the theme of the greatest medieval poem, Chaucer chose a religious pilgrimage as the framework of the richest portrayal of medieval men and women in the earthly scene. Chaucer's pilgrims are not dead, but very much alive; they are on their way to thank St. Thomas of Canterbury for his help in keeping them in that state! Yet the twenty-nine travelers, including those described in the course of the pilgrimage, are not incomparable in number or vividness to the characters presented with similar fullness in the *Divine Comedy*. Both poets—when they wish—make the individual stand out clearly and distinctly; both—when they choose—present fully the background, the milieu, the occupational or moral setting from which the individual emerges and in terms of which he is to be estimated. Both poets sketch the portraits with extraordinary insight, discrimination, and perception of the subtle mixture of good and bad in humanity. It

would be interesting to attempt the assignment of Chaucer's pilgrims to their proper places in the *Divine Comedy*—assuming that each of them dies in the condition described in the Prologue.

With the Knight, the Parson, his brother the Plowman, the Clerk of Oxford, and the Nun's Priest (who is characterized in the course of the journey) we should have no trouble. Though thoroughly human, flesh-and-blood people, these are all wholly excellent and admirable men. Moral and ethical nobility is a part of their personal and vocational perfection. They embody—not personify as abstractions—the ideal characteristics of men in their several stations in life; they are models as well as individuals. But these individuals are living men on earth. We recognize in the portrait of the Clerk, for instance, an ingredient of tacit humor hardly duplicated in Dante's presentation of the blessed. The Clerk's unique traits of temperament and taste—the concise habit of speech, the aloofness, the ardent book-collecting—these might be a little irrelevant in Heaven, while eminently suited to his portrait in this world.

The scoundrels, likewise, would be easy to deal with. The Friar, the Pardoner, the Summoner, and, I fear, also the Shipman, the Reeve, the Manciple, and the Miller, would easily find their respective niches in the circles of Hell—most of them in the ten subdivisions of the eighth circle, in which those guilty of various kinds of fraud

are punished. Dante might have made each of them tell his story in much the same terms as Chaucer used. He would have done it with as much gusto; indeed, his work includes parallels to most of them. But denunciation and contempt would have replaced Chaucer's detached delight in the cleverness and success of their rascality. Again, the vantage point dictates an appropriate difference of treatment; time and our earth are a different background from eternity and Hell. Both Dante's and Chaucer's portraits achieve symmetry. But Dante's are more decisive, more limited, more exclusively concentrated on ethical definition; Chaucer's have room for more mundane, personal, and morally neutral detail.

We should have greater difficulty in classifying some of the others. The exquisite Prioress is doubtless destined for Heaven. But should we expect to find her, fairly soon, among the blessed in one of the three lowest spheres—the moon, Mercury, or Venus? Is she, like Piccarda, a soul whose unquestionably genuine devotion is linked with an intrinsically limited spiritual capacity—limited in a way suggested by her unmonastic fondness for pet dogs, nice clothes, and fashionable manners? Or is her sensibility an outward sign of great spiritual endowment, so that, after some time on the terraces of Purgatory, she will be found among the higher spheres of the celestial hierarchy? Dante had to decide such questions concerning his characters, and his portraits naturally show how they fit the classifications. Chau-

cer did not have to decide; his pilgrims still belong to the earth, and some of their portraits are executed without conclusive moral definition. The worldly, hunting Monk, a fine figure of a man—will he take his place among the avaricious or the hypocrites in Hell? Or will he purge his worldliness, like Pope Adrian, on the fifth ledge of the mountain?

In general, Chaucer shows a large "middle" group of people, confirmed perhaps in neither wickedness nor holiness, but absorbed in the things of this world. Such an absorption exposes the professed cleric, secular or monastic, to ironical satire; for the religious vocation involves renunciation of the world. This is why many of the pilgrims connected with the Church are obvious targets. But laymen also run the risk of ridicule if their absorption in worldly matters leads to excessive egotism or affectation or limitation of perspective. Thus the Sergeant of the Law, whose days are, in fact, full, *seems* even busier than he is; the Merchant apparently talks entirely about profits; and the Physician's financial astuteness is not un-mixed with complacency. The Franklin's pride in his hospitality and fine table is a more attractive form of egotism—although one might hesitate to become his cook! Traits like these, casually mentioned in the Prologue, would be valuable hints as to where on the terraces of Purgatory the several pilgrims might be expected to spend some time. Meanwhile, it is just such qualities, the weaknesses, foibles,

excesses, and limitations, that endow them with distinctness and poignancy in this world—in short, with individuality and personality.

It is often said that the characters in the Prologue are delineated in terms of the superlative—each of the pilgrims is the best, or worst, representative of his particular kind of human being. This is true. Yet it is also true that Chaucer finds far less to say about some than about others. He is, in fact, interested in them in different ways. Thus the Knight is described at length; occupationally, ethically, and otherwise he emerges as an individual member of a class. His son, the young Squire, is presented primarily as a fine but standard specimen of his type, the fashionable young warrior and politely cultivated "lover." And in their servant, the Yeoman, we see a yet smaller segment of the whole character: he is simply an expert woodsman. Other pilgrims, like the five Guildsmen, receive only a collective portrait; they all share in the pride of their crafts and their organized "fraternity," in the garb of which they are handsomely turned out. A few of the company are not described at all in the *Prologue*.

Evidently Chaucer has allowed himself a margin of freedom in his account of this imaginary company as they present themselves to the imaginary observer and fellow traveler, the poet. With the future possibilities of the pilgrimage in mind, he readily leaves a few members of the group undeveloped; one of these, the Nun's Priest,

does emerge in full characterization as the tales proceed. But in the Prologue itself Chaucer gives us the fullest, the most varied, and the liveliest, panorama of men and women in medieval literature. The portraits are usually fairly complete and satisfying in themselves, though, as we have noted, some are miniatures and some large canvases, some are full face, some profile, and a few quarter face. Yet the portraits are not merely lively in themselves; they are dynamic; they prepare us for the highly dramatic relationships which develop among the pilgrims in the course of the journey.

#### THE PARDONER'S TALE

The Pardoner is one of the liveliest rascals on the Canterbury pilgrimage. His rascality is so complete that it may be difficult for us to realize just what a pardoner was properly or ideally like in the fourteenth century. For one thing, a legitimate pardoner did not go about "pardon-ing" people for their sins. Many such men were not—and were not expected to be—priests, in the proper sense of the term, at all. Many doubtless were in what is called minor orders, extending up to subdeacon. Such men were not qualified or authorized to hear confession or grant absolution. The legitimate activity of a pardoner consisted in making available to devout persons a certificate of ecclesiastical "indulgence." The charge made for this constituted a gift or offering to God and the Church. The purchase was therefore considered a worthy act in the sight of God which might benefit the

souls of the purchaser's relatives or friends if they were doing penance in purgatory (but *not* if they had been sent to hell).

No doubt there were many perfectly honest and worthy pardoners in medieval Europe. But the opportunities for personal profit are evident, and there must have been some who exploited these opportunities unscrupulously. The satiric literature of the time tells us much about bad pardoners, and Chaucer's is clearly one of them. Besides distributing indulgences of doubtful validity, he preaches in country churches, intimidating the congregation so that they will not fail to put money in the collection plate; and he makes a good profit out of fake relics. Far from being ashamed of these vices, Chaucer's Pardoner is proud of his skill in dishonesty. He tells us all about it in the Prologue to his tale.

The Pardoner's Tale itself, furthermore, is a sample of his preaching. The text of the sermon is his favorite: Covetousness is the root of evil. It is ironical, of course, that such a man should preach so regularly and strenuously against his own greatest sin. His sermon, as Chaucer gives it, is really a very old and simple story about three men who went in search of Death and found him unexpectedly. The Pardoner dramatizes the narrative with great energy and imagination. In addition, he embroiders it with brief anecdotes which are really digressions. Before he has got really started on the story, moreover, he takes time out for a

ringing denunciation of gluttony (including drunkenness), gambling, and swearing—complete with examples of each.

#### THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE

The tale of Chanticleer and Dame Partlet is Chaucer at his best. Since the basic story, of a cock, a hen, and a fox, is rich in human implications and applications and in intrinsic humor, it must have been especially congenial to the imaginative comic spirit of the mature Chaucer—and it apparently does belong to a late period in the composition of the *Canterbury Tales*. For its narrator the poet chose the genial Priest who rode with the two nuns on the pilgrimage; his good taste and inexhaustible sense of humor have been ripened by years of reading and observation of life.

The setting of the tale in the Canterbury pilgrimage contributes to its total effect. The Knight, seconded by the Host, has suddenly interrupted the Monk, who was retailing an apparently endless series of "tragedies," or tales of misfortune. This has become unendurably gloomy and dull, they protest; they want something more cheerful and entertaining! When the Monk has nothing else to offer, the Host turns to Sir John, the Priest, and bids him "Tell us a thing to make our spirits glad. / Be cheerful, though the jade you ride is bad."

Thus launched, the Priest gives us a remarkable version of one of the favorite stories of the Middle Ages. For of course Chaucer did not invent the plot itself. The popular literature of

Europe had long included tales of the cock's capture through his weakness for flattery, and his escape through the fox's overweening pride. The narrative can be condensed in a paragraph or spun out to indeterminate length, according to the inclination of the narrator. The Priest, without losing sight of its identity as a moral fable, makes it many other things as well.

First, with leisurely detail and humor, he gives the cock and hen a human background. The quiet, realistic description of the circumstances of the poor widow—her narrow cottage with a small yard surrounded by a wooden fence, her three cows, three hogs, and one sheep, named Moll—reads like the beginning of a skillfully told modern short story. The implicit contrast with a great house or castle is cumulatively comic; it evokes a smile rather than a guffaw.

Then we are brought to the description of Chanticleer and his seven wives—they are part of the widow's household, indoors and outdoors. The account of the cock is at first simply "superlative," like the characterization of the Canterbury pilgrims themselves; he is initially the best imaginable cock. His regular crowing, exactly on the hour, doubtless appeared less extraordinary to Chaucer's audience than it does to us, for apparently this accuracy was commonly attributed to roosters during the medieval period. But the detailed description of his features and coloring is done in the manner of the literary portraits of heroes in romances; and the cock's comb, scalloped "like

a crenelated castle wall," is a first touch of the mock-heroic. Partlet too has the virtues of highborn ladies in romances; she is courtly, discreet, and debonair. And she has held Chanticleer's firm affection since she was seven nights old!

Having been thus acquainted with the general capacities of these unusual chickens, we are now moved on to the first incident in the story itself—Chanticleer's dream. The tone here is that of ordinary, commonplace domesticity: a husband is awakened from a nightmare, which he then relates to his wife. Their further conversation is in the same vein, Partlet combining in her character both the comic-strip wife who measures her husband, reproachfully, against a standard of heroic perfection, and the more ordinary Mrs. Smith who confidently diagnoses her man's indisposition and energetically tells him what to take for it. The line "Have you no man's heart, when you have a beard?" indicates how completely the cock and hen have become a human pair.

In the matrimonial argument about the nature and significance of dreams Chaucer employs the two principal medieval theories on the subject. Doubtless he is right in assigning the physiological explanation to Partlet; women are said to be more realistic and practical than men. And we might say that her sixty-two-line speech exemplifies the feminine love of talking—if Chanticleer did not take two hundred lines to answer her! Both speeches in fact poke fun at the method of proof by citing authorities. But Chanticleer's ex-



tended monologue has a further purpose; it is structural in the development of the plot; it produces the comic irony which is at the center of the tale. For the very act of vigorously refuting Partlet and proving that dreams *do* portend danger has the effect of reassuring him. Having won the argument—to his own satisfaction and by default of rebuttal from Partlet—Chanticleer is in reality no longer disturbed about the dream. His thoughts turn exuberantly to love, and the climax of the plot is reached when he declares: "I am then so full of pure felicity / That I defy whatever sort of dream!"

Having fully established this mood in Chanticleer—having in fact characterized him in terms of superheroism—Chaucer tells us that a cunning fox has got through the hedge during the night and is now hiding in a bed of herbs in the yard, lying in wait for Chanticleer. This leads to a citation of traitors and deceivers from epic literature and an elaborate raising of the question of predestination, foreknowledge, and free will.

Next it is pointed out that Chanticleer unfortunately took his wife's advice about the dream—"Women have many times, as wise men hold, / Offered advice that left men in the cold"; and Adam's loss of Paradise is immediately cited as a parallel. Thus we see finally that the whole situation has been presented as a kind of parody of the Fall of Man, with Chanticleer as Adam, Partlet as Eve, and the fox, now lurking but later to speak with persuasive and successful flattery, as the Serpent.

The rest of the tale is carried out in the same vein of elaborate mockery, with allusions, exclamations, and comparisons. The fox displays consummate diplomacy, Chanticleer is as naive and susceptible as possible, and Partlet's grief is epic. The finest passage, among many excellent, is the picture of the utter confusion and uproar of men, women, beasts, and fowls when the alarm is given. At last—to provide the happy ending demanded by the Knight and the Host as well as to conform to the familiar plot of the story—comes the second reversal, when Chanticleer escapes. And in conclusion Sir John, who, for all his gift of wit and fun, is a deeply and wholesomely religious man, reminds us:

Such is it to be reckless and  
unheedful  
And trust in flattery. . . .  
Think twice, and take the moral,  
my good men!

### MALORY, LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

The figure of King Arthur is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, in English legend and romance. Its origin is lost, or all but lost, in the sixth-century struggle between the native Britons and the invading Angles and Saxons. There probably was an actual British chieftain or tribal king named Arthur who led his countrymen in battles against the Germanic invaders. But of this period we know little that is definite or clear. From the twelfth century onward, however, there are full accounts of a legendary Arthur who is described as a great, victorious, im-

perial ruler. At his court are gathered—eventually—many of the most famous knights of medieval story: Gawaine, Launcelot, Percival, and Tristan, to name only a few. Each of these, as well as many another, became the subject of a whole cluster of tales, recounted first in poetry and later in prose. These were told and retold in virtually all the languages of Europe during the Middle Ages.

Sir Thomas Malory's work, called *Le Morte d'Arthur* and composed in the second half of the fifteenth century, is thus the culmination of a long development. In its entirety, it fills two volumes and deals with many of the adventures of Arthur's knights as well as with the career of the king himself. Malory often mentions "the French book" as his source. In reality, he translated and combined material selected from a number of

French texts. The result is a remarkably fine piece of late-medieval—or "old-fashioned"—English prose. The parts of the book contained in the present volume tell of the "coming" and the "passing" of Arthur, as they were later called by Tennyson. Both Arthur's attainment of the kingship and his departure from the world are accompanied by miraculous events and circumstances. In between is the story of the disrupting conflicts which finally destroy the power—but not the glory—of Arthur's realm. Launcelot's loyalty is broken by the clash between his duty to the king and his devotion to the queen, Guenever, whose "courtly" lover he is; this insoluble conflict of loyalties finally destroys all three individuals. For it is because of the defection of Launcelot that the unworthy Mordred—although he too meets his end—is able to bring Arthur to ruin.

#### LIVES, WRITINGS, AND CRITICISM

*In almost all instances, biographical and critical works are listed only if they are available in English.*

##### *The Song of Roland*

The best summary in English of information about the origin and nature of the poem is contained in the introduction to the edition by T. A. Jenkins, *La Chanson de Roland*, 1924, pp. ix–xcviii. For discussion against the background of the *chanson de geste* in general, see Urban Tigner Holmes, *A History of Old French Literature*, 1938. For French estimates of the poem, see Gaston Paris, *La Littérature française au moyen-âge*, third edition, 1903; and E. Faral, *La Chanson de Roland*, 1933, in the series of volumes entitled *Les Classiques expliqués*.

##### *Aucassin and Nicolette*

For a statement of the little that is known about the background of *Aucassin and Nicolette* (*Aucassin et Nicolette*), see the English introduction to the edition by F. W. Bourdillon, 1919; and Urban Tigner Holmes, *A History of Old*

*French Literature*, 1938. Henry Adams devotes a chapter to it in *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*, 1913.

##### "OUR LADY'S TUMBLER"

See the discussion of the Miracles of Our Lady (*Miracles de Notre Dame*) in Urban Tigner Holmes, *A History of Old French Literature*, 1938; and in Henry Adams, *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*, 1913.

##### DANTE ALIGHIERI

**LIFE.** Born in late May, 1265, at Florence, Italy. He took part in the battle of Campaldino, 1289, on the Florentine side. In 1291 he married Gemma Donati, by whom he had two sons and one or two daughters. In 1295 he was a member of the "people's council" of Florence, and in 1300 served for two months, the usual term, as one of the six Priors, or magistrates, of Florence. In 1302 the Blacks, opponents of the Whites (a political group with which

Dante was affiliated), seized power in Florence, and he, with other White leaders, was exiled. Dante had gone to Rome on a mission to Pope Boniface in 1301, and as the decree of banishment was soon coupled with a condemnation to execution by fire (on false charges of corruption in office), he never returned to his native city. The last twenty years of his life, from 1301 to 1321, were spent in exile in various parts of Italy and possibly elsewhere. He died at Ravenna in September, 1321.

**CHIEF WRITINGS.** *The New Life* (*La vita nuova*), probably written about 1292—sonnets and odes with a prose account and running commentary by the poet; the poems were mostly inspired by Beatrice. *The Banquet* (*Il convivio*), of uncertain date, unfinished—a work of encyclopedic scope in the form of a prose commentary on a series of the poet's odes (*canzoni*). *On the Vernacular Language* (*De vulgari eloquentia*), in Latin prose, of uncertain date, unfinished—an essay on language and poetry, especially on the dialects of Italy and Provence; of great linguistic and literary interest. *On Single Government* (*De monarchia*), in Latin prose, of uncertain date—a closely reasoned defense of world government, together with an attempt to demonstrate the independent status of the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy. *The Divine Comedy* (*La divina commedia*), date of beginning uncertain, apparently finished shortly before Dante's death in 1321.

**BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.** C. H. Grandgent, *Dante*, 1916, and the introduction to his edition of the *Divine Comedy*, revised, 1933; T. S. Eliot, "Dante," most easily available in his *Selected Essays*, 1932; George Santayana, "Dante," in *Three Philosophical Poets*, 1910. Some recent studies are E. Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher*, 1948; Charles Williams, *The Figure of Beatrice*, 1943; and the introduction and notes by Dorothy Sayers to her translation of the *Inferno*, 1949. Also helpful is Michele Barbi, *Life of Dante*, translated by Paul G. Ruggiers, 1954.

For background in medieval European history and literature see K. Vossler, *Medieval Culture: An Introduction to Dante and His Times*, translated from the German, 2 vols., 1929).

#### GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

**LIFE.** Born in 1313 in Paris, son of a Florentine businessman and a Frenchwoman. He was apparently taken to Italy in infancy, and in 1328 was sent to Naples to learn commerce in the office of his father's partner; but after six years, bored with business, he turned to the study of canon law. In 1336 Boccaccio saw Maria d'Aquino in a

church at Naples; she is represented as Fiammetta in several of his works, including the *Decameron*. A romantic affair ended in Maria's desertion of her lover, and finally in her death in the plague of 1348. In 1341 Boccaccio returned to Florence. After 1351 he was greatly influenced by Petrarch, and turned in his writing from Italian poetry and prose fiction to Latin works of a scholarly nature. He sheltered Leon Pilatus, inducing him to make the first translation of Homer from Greek. Unlike Petrarch, Boccaccio was devoted to the study of Dante, of whom he wrote a biography; in 1373 he was appointed to a Dante chair or lectureship in Florence. He died in 1375.

**CHIEF WRITINGS.** Italian narrative verse: *Filostrato*, a source of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*; *Teseide*, a source of Chaucer's *Knights Tale*. *The Filostrato of Giovanni Boccaccio*, a translation with parallel text by Nathaniel Edward Griffin and Arthur Beckwith Myrick, 1929, is convenient. Italian prose: *Decameron*, finished about 1353; *Vita di Dante*, Latin works: *De casibus virorum illustrium* and *De claris mulieribus*, compendiums of biographical sketches; *De genealogiis deorum*, a kind of dictionary of mythology and defense of poetry.

**BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.** T. C. Chubb, *The Life of Giovanni Boccaccio*, 1930; Edward Hutton, *Giovanni Boccaccio*, 1910. Interesting and sensitive criticism is to be found in Charles G. Osgood, *Boccaccio on Poetry*, 1930.

#### GEOFFREY CHAUCER

**LIFE.** Born in 1340 or a few years later, son of a London wine merchant. In 1357 he apparently became a page in the household of the Countess of Ulster, wife of Lionel, a son of King Edward III. In 1359, in military service with the English in France, he was captured by the French and ransomed with royal funds. Between 1368 and 1378 Chaucer made several journeys to France and Italy as king's envoy or courier. In 1374 he received a pension from John of Gaunt, a son of Edward III, and became comptroller of customs in the port of London; about 1385 he moved to Kent, where he was elected knight of the shire in 1386, and sat in Parliament for one term. In 1389 he became Clerk of the King's Works (under Richard II), in 1391 deputy forester of the royal forest of North Petherton in Somerset, and in 1399 pensioner of King Henry IV. He died in 1400.

**CHIEF WRITINGS.** *The Romance of the Rose*, a translation (probably never finished) of the *Roman de la Rose*; the *Book of the Duchess*; the *House of Fame*; the *Parliament of Fowls*—all these are comparatively early works in English verse. He also translated *A*

*Treatise on the Astrolabe* and Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* into English prose. His major works are *Troilus and Criseyde*, completed about 1385; and the *Canterbury Tales*, composed largely in the 1390's but with some use of earlier material.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. The essential edition is F. N. Robinson, *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 1933. Social background is described admirably in G. G. Coulton, *Chaucer and His England*, sixth edition, 1937. The artistic growth of the poet is sketched in J. L. Lowes, *Geoffrey Chaucer and His Art*, 1941. For general criticism see G. L. Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry*, 1915; and R. K. Root, *The Poetry of Chaucer*, 1922; for a French view, see E. Legouis, *Chaucer*, 1910, English translation 1913.

#### SIR THOMAS MALORY

The identity of the author has never been absolutely established. But there was a Thomas Malory, a knight, born sometime in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, who had a stormy and irregular life and who was several times in prison. This man died in 1471. All things considered, it is at least highly probable that he was our author. The work, called since Caxton's printing (1485) *Le Morte d'Arthur*, is really a collective translation of several separate French prose works, along with some native English metrical romance matter. It was finished in 1469 or 1470. For the most authoritative treatment of the whole question, and for the best text, the reader should consult Eugène Vinaver, *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, 3 vols., 1947.

## The Saga of Hrafnkel Priest of Frey\*

It was in the days of King Harald the Fairhaired,<sup>1</sup> son of Halfdane the Black, son of Gudrud the Hunting King, son of Halfdane the Mild and Food-stingy, son of Eysteinn Fart, son of Olaf Wood-ax, king of the Swedes, that a man named Hallfred<sup>2</sup> came with his ship to Broaddale in Iceland. This is below Fleetdale District. On the ship were his wife and son, whose name was Hrafnkel. The son was then fifteen years old, promising and capable. Hallfred set up housekeeping. A foreign slave woman whose name was Arnthrud died there during the winter, and hence the place has since been called Arnthrudstead. In the spring Hallfred moved his household north across the heath and built a dwelling there called Goatdale. One night he dreamed that a man came to him and said, "There you are lying, all unawares, Hallfred. Move your household away to the west, across Lakefleet; all your luck is there." After that he woke up. He moved his household out across the Crooked River to the Tongue, to a place which has since been called Hallfredstead, and he lived there till old age. He left behind a pair of goats. And the same day that Hallfred moved away a landslide struck the house and these animals perished, and hence it has since been called Goatdale.

Hrafnkel was in the habit of riding over the heath in the summer. At this time Glacierdale was settled as far up as the bridges. Hrafnkel rode up along Fleetdale District and saw where an unoc-

\* Translated by John C. McGalliard. This translation is based primarily on the edition of the original by Frank Stanton Cawley, *Hrafnkels Saga Freysgoda*, Harvard University Press, 1932.

1. a strong king who ruled in Norway from about 860 to 933 A.D. Nicknames based on personal traits are very common in Scandinavian stories of

the Middle Ages.

2. Hallfred came to Iceland about 920 and settled on the east coast, where most of the events in the saga occur. Exceptions are the incidents at the national assembly, or Thing, and Sám's visit to Thorgeir and Thorkel, who live at Cod Firth, in the northwestern corner of Iceland.

cupied valley led off from Glaciersdale. This valley seemed to Hrafnkel more habitable than the other valleys that he had seen before. When Hrafnkel came home he asked his father for his share of the property, and said that he wanted to build a homestead for himself. His father consented, and he set up his farm in that valley and called it Adalbol. Hrafnkel married Oddbjorg Skjolf's daughter from Salmon River Dale. They had two sons; the elder was named Thorir and the younger Asbjorn. At the time when Hrafnkel took up land at Adalbol he held a great sacrifice; and thereafter he maintained a large temple.<sup>3</sup> Hrafnkel loved no other god more than Frey,<sup>4</sup> and gave him half of all his best possessions. Hrafnkel had the whole valley and gave land to men; but he wished to be their chief and took priestly authority over them. Because of this he was given a nickname and was called Frey's Priest; he was very headstrong, but very capable. He compelled the Glaciersdale people to be his dependents; he was mild and easygoing with his own men but hard and strict with the Glaciersdale men, and they got no equality from him. Hrafnkel often engaged in duels and compensated no one with money, so that no man got any recompense from him, no matter what Hrafnkel did. Fleetdale District is difficult to travel, very stony and swampy; nevertheless, father and son rode regularly to each other's places, for they were on good terms. The road seemed difficult to Hallfred and he sought a route over the peaks that rise in Fleetdale District; there he got a drier and a longer road, and it is called Hallfred's Way. Only those who are quite familiar with Fleetdale District take this road.

Bjarni was the name of a man who lived at the farm called Bath-houses. It is close to Hrafnkelsdale. He was married and had two sons by his wife; one was named Sám<sup>5</sup> and the other Eyvind, both fine and able men. Eyvind was at home with his father, but Sám was married and lived in the northern part of the valley at the farm called Playsheds; and he had a great deal of property. Sám was very fond of litigation and keen in the law, but Eyvind became a voyager and went off to Norway and was there a year. From there he went on out to Constantinople<sup>6</sup> and was honorably received by the king of the Greeks and was there for a time.

3. As the text indicates, the priest in the pagan period in Scandinavia had his own temple—a simple wooden building with statues of the principal god or gods—and offered sacrifice in behalf of those families who lived in his district. But the priesthood seems to have involved no moral or ethical responsibilities. Instead, the office was usually held by the leader in the secular affairs of the community; the priest exercised a quite mundane authority over those in his district.

4. The god of fertility, including

agriculture; along with Odin and Thor, one of the three most prominent Scandinavian—and general Germanic—deities.

5. Not the biblical "Samuel," but an old Germanic name; the vowel was pronounced like the *a* in *father*.

6. the present Istanbul. The sagas tell of many Scandinavians who served for varying periods of time as members of the Varangian Guard, as the armed retinue of the emperor was called. Thorkel, who appears later in this saga, is one of these.

Among his possessions Hrafnkel had a treasure that seemed to him better than any other. This was a horse, dark gray with a black stripe down the back, whom he called Freyfaxi. To Frey, his friend, he gave half the horse. He had such great affection for that horse that he took an oath that he would slay the man who should ride it without his permission.

There was a man named Thorbjorn; he was a brother of Bjarni and lived at the farm in Hrafnkelsdale called Hill, opposite Adalbol to the east. Thorbjorn had little wealth, but many family dependents. His eldest son was named Einar; he was large and well built. It happened, one spring, that Thorbjorn told Einar that he should look for some kind of job, "because I do not need more workmen than the crowd that is here; but it will be easy for you to get a good post, for you are well built. Lack of affection is not the cause of this separation, for you are the most useful of my children; rather, my poverty and lack of means is the cause of it; my other children will become farm workers, but you will fare better in getting a job than they." Einar answered, "You have told me this too late, for all the best jobs are now filled, and I don't like to take the leavings." One day Einar took his horse and rode to Adalbol. Hrafnkel was sitting in the hall. He greeted Einar cheerfully. Einar asked Hrafnkel for work. He answered, "Why did you look for this so late? For I should have taken you first. But now I have engaged all my staff, except for the one job for which you will have no inclination." Einar asked what that was. Hrafnkel said that he had not employed a man for the sheep-herding but that he was in great need of one. Einar said that he did not care what he worked at, whether it was that or something else, but that he wanted food and lodging for two seasons. "I will make you a quick offer," said Hrafnkel; "you are to drive fifty ewes to the summer shed and bring home all the summer wood. You will do this for board and lodging for two seasons. But I wish to stipulate one thing with you as with my other shepherds. Freyfaxi goes about in the dales with his herd; you will look after him winter and summer. But I give you warning about one thing: I wish you never to get on his back, however strong the motive you have to do so, for I have taken a great oath to be the slayer of the man who rides him. Twelve mares trail after him; whichever of them you wish shall be yours to ride by night or day. Do now as I say; for there is an old proverb that 'he who warns another is not responsible.' Now you know what I have had to say." Einar said that he would not be so ill bent as to ride the horse that was forbidden him if there were many others available. Einar now went home for his clothes and took them to Adalbol. Later he moved up to the shed in Hrafnkelsdale which is called Rocky Strip Shed.

Einar got along nicely as the summer passed, so that no sheep were lost until midsummer. Then, one night, nearly thirty ewes were missing. Einar looked through all the pastures and did not find them. One morning, when they had been lost nearly a week, Einar went out early. The rain and mist from the south had cleared off. He took his staff, bridle, and saddle-blanket and went along across the Rocky Strip River, which ran directly in front of the shed. There, on the gravelly banks, lay the sheep that had been at home the evening before. He drove them back to the shed and went to look for those that had been missing all along. Now he saw the herd of horses on the banks ahead of him and decided to catch one to ride, thinking that he would get on more swiftly if he rode than if he walked. But when he came up and approached the horses they were all shy—except only Freyfaxi—not being used to riders. Freyfaxi was as quiet as if he had been rooted to the ground. Einar knew that the morning was advancing, and he believed that Hrafnkel would not know it if he should ride the stallion. Now he took the horse, bridled him, put the saddle-blanket on his back and rode up by Rocky River Gorge, then up to the glacier and west along it to where the Glacier River descends, and down the river to Hot Spring Shed. He asked all the shepherds at the sheds whether anyone had seen the sheep, and no one had. Einar rode Freyfaxi steadily from dawn till midafternoon. The horse carried him swiftly and far, for he was a good mount. Then it occurred to Einar that it was time to go back and drive in the flock that was at home, though he should not find the others. He rode then east over the ridge into Hrafnkelsdale, and when he came down by Rocky Strip he heard a bleating of sheep ahead in the ravine, which he had ridden past earlier. He turned in that direction and saw thirty ewes in front of him—the same ones that he had lost a week ago. He drove them home with the rest of the flock.

The horse was all wet with sweat, so that it dripped from every hair; he was badly spattered with mud and completely worn out. He rolled over about twelve times and after that set up a loud neighing. Then he took off at high speed down the road. Einar started after him, trying to catch him and take him back to his herd, but he was so wild that Einar got nowhere near him. The horse ran down the valley and did not stop until he came to Adalbol. At that moment Hrafnkel was sitting at the table. When the horse came to the door he neighed loudly. Hrafnkel told a woman who was serving the meal to go to the door, for a horse had neighed, "and it seemed to me like Freyfaxi's neigh." She went to the door and saw Freyfaxi in bad shape. She told Hrafnkel that Freyfaxi was outside the door, looking very filthy. "What does the fine fellow want—why has he come home?" said Hrafnkel. "No good will

come of this." Then he went out and saw Freyfaxi and said to him, "I don't like it at all that you are treated this way, my fosterling; but you had your wits about you, for you have told me about it, and it shall be avenged. Go now to your herd." And the horse went at once up the valley to his herd of mares. Hrafnkel went to bed in the evening and slept through the night. Then in the morning he had his horse saddled and rode up to the shed. He was dressed in blue clothes and had an ax in his hand, but no other weapons. Einar had just finished driving the sheep into the milking pens. He was leaning on the railing, counting the sheep, and the women were busy milking. They all greeted Hrafnkel. He asked how things were going. Einar answered, "They haven't gone so well with me, for thirty ewes were missing for nearly a week; but they are found now." Hrafnkel said that he was not complaining about that, "but has there been nothing worse?—and in fact sheep have not been lost as often as was expected. But did you not ride Freyfaxi yesterday?" Einar said he could not deny it. Hrafnkel answered, "Why did you ride that horse, which was forbidden you, when there were enough others that you were allowed to ride? Yet I should have let you off the first time if I had not taken such an oath—though you have clearly admitted the act." And in the belief that no good comes to those who bring down a curse on their heads by breaking their oaths, he leaped from his horse's back to Einar and struck him a death blow. After this he rode home to Adalbol and reported the news. Then he sent another man to the shed to take care of the sheep. And he had Einar carried from the shed to the hillside and raised a beacon beside the burial mound. It is called Einar's Beacon, and marks midevening<sup>7</sup> as seen from the shed.

Thorbjorn, over at Hill, heard of the slaying of Einar, his son. He was much distressed at the news. Now he took his horse and rode over to Adalbol and asked Hrafnkel for legal compensation for his son's slaying.<sup>8</sup> Hrafnkel said that he had killed more men than this one: "It is not unknown to you that I am unwilling to pay compensation for any man, and people have to put up with that. Nevertheless, I grant that this deed appears among the worst of the slayings that I have committed. You have been my neighbor for a long time and you have pleased me well—indeed, each has pleased the other. No other small matter would have caused trouble

7. about six p.m. At that hour the sun is on a straight line drawn between the shed and the beacon.

8. When a homicide occurred, the slain man's relatives might (1) accept compensation in money or property, the amount being arranged either informally or, more formally, through arbiters; or (2) take vengeance against the slayer or a close kinsman; or (3)

bring suit against the slayer in the law court—at this period, the national assembly, called the Thing. Without acknowledging an obligation to do so, Hrafnkel in his reply actually offers rather liberal compensation for Einar, but on his own terms; he refuses to submit the matter to intermediaries, as Thorbjorn wishes.



between Einar and me, if he had not ridden the horse. But we often have this to regret, that we are too free-spoken; less often do we regret saying fewer words rather than more. I will now show you that this act of mine seems to me worse than the others that I have done. I will supply your household with milk cattle in the summer and with meat in the fall; I will do this for you every season, as long as you wish to keep up a house. We shall provide for your sons and daughters with my support and assist them so that they make good marriage settlements thereby; and as for anything that you know to be in my possession and that you have need of, you shall tell me of it and not go without anything that you need. You shall maintain your household as long as it pleases you and move over here when you get tired of it, and I will take care of you till you die. Thus we shall be reconciled; and I will venture the boast that many would say that this man is very expensive." "I will not accept that offer," said Thorbjorn. "What terms do you want, then?" said Hrafnkel. Then Thorbjorn said, "I wish us to choose men to arbitrate between us." Hrafnkel answered, "Then you consider yourself my equal, and we shall never be reconciled on that basis."

Then Thorbjorn rode away and down through the district. He came to Bathhouses and found Bjarni, his brother, told him the news, and asked him to take some part in the case. Bjarni said that he was not dealing with his match when Hrafnkel was involved, "and even though we had a great deal of money, still we couldn't contest a suit with Hrafnkel; and it is true that he is strong who knows himself. Hrafnkel has won out in lawsuits over many who had more backing than we. It seems to me that you have shown little sense if you have refused such good terms, and I will have nothing to do with the matter." Thorbjorn spoke many hard words to his brother, saying that the more important a thing was, the less he could be counted on. Thorbjorn then rode away and they said good-bye with little cordiality. He did not stop till he came down to Playsheds and knocked on the door. Someone came to the door and Thorbjorn asked Sám to come out. Sám greeted his kinsman cheerfully and invited him to stay. Thorbjorn was slow in his responses. Sám saw the dejection in his face and asked the news, and Thorbjorn told him of the slaying of Einar, his son. "It is no great news," said Sám, "that Hrafnkel is killing men." Thorbjorn asked whether Sám was willing to offer him some assistance, adding that "this case is such that, although the slain man is closest to me, yet the blow has fallen not far from you." "Have you asked for any redress from Hrafnkel?" Thorbjorn told the truth about everything that had happened between him and Hrafnkel. "I have not been aware before," said Sám, "that Hrafnkel has made such offers to anyone as he has to you. Now I am willing to ride with you up to

Adalbol, and then let us take up the matter politely with Hrafnkel and find out whether he will confirm the original offer; in any event, things will go well for him." "Two points," says Thorbjorn: "one is that Hrafnkel will not be willing to do it now; the other is that I am no more in favor of it now than when I rode away from there." Sám said, "I think it will be a hard job to oppose Hrafnkel in a lawsuit." Thorbjorn answered, "That is why you young men never get anywhere—everything looks too big to you. I think there can be nobody who has such shiftless fellows for kinsmen as I. It appears to me that men like you are in a bad way: you seem to be keen in law and active enough in petty suits, but you will not take over this case, which is so clear. It will be a disgrace to you, as is right, for you are the great braggart of our whole family. I see now how it will turn out." Sám answered, "How much better off are you if I should take over the case and then we should both be shamefully driven away from the court?" Thorbjorn answered, "Nevertheless, it is a great consolation to me that you should take over the suit; let it end as it may." Sám answered, "I go into this thing against my will; I am doing it more for the sake of our kinship than anything else. But you shall know that, in aiding you, I feel that I am helping a foolish man." Then Sám reached out his hand and formally took over the case from Thorbjorn.

Sám got his horse and rode up the valley to a farmstead and gave legal notice of the slaying. He got men to aid him against Hrafnkel. Hrafnkel heard of this, and it appeared laughable to him that Sám had started a suit against him. Winter came on now. Then, in the spring, when the summons-days<sup>9</sup> came along, Sám rode from his home up to Adalbol and summoned Hrafnkel in the case of the slaying of Einar. After this Sám rode down through the dales and summoned householders to go to the Thing. Then he let matters rest until the time when people got ready for the trip to the Thing. Hrafnkel then sent men down through the dales and summoned *his* jurors. With his company of seventy Thingmen he rode east across Fleetdale District and around the end of the lake, over the ridge to Screeddale, up through the valley and south at Ax Heath to She-Bear Firth, reaching Thingmen's Road at Side. South from Fleetdale it is seventeen days' journey to Thingfield. Then after Hrafnkel had ridden out of the district Sám summoned men. For his company he got mostly men without land and those whom he had called up; he supplied these men with weapons and clothes and provisions. Sám took a different route from the valley; he went north to the bridge, across it, and thence over Madderdale Heath, stopping in Madderdale for the night. From there the company

9. the fixed legal time when both defendants and witnesses were given

notice by a plaintiff to appear at the next session of the assembly, the Thing.

rode to Broadshoulder Tongue, then down Blue Fells and from there into Crookdale and on south to Sand. Then they came down to Sheepfells and went on from there to Thingfield.<sup>10</sup>

Hrafnkel had not yet arrived; the journey had been slower for him since he had a longer route. Sám set up a booth<sup>11</sup> for his men at a considerable distance from the place where the men of the East Firths were accustomed to lodge. Sometime afterward Hrafnkel came to the Thing and set up his booth in his usual place. He heard that Sám was at the Thing and thought that amusing. This Thing was very well attended, most of the chiefs in Iceland being on hand. Sám looked up all the chiefs and asked for help and support, but all answered the same way: no one said he had such obligations to Sám that he would be willing to oppose Hrafnkel Priest and thus endanger his own position. They said, too, that matters had turned out in just one way for most men who had engaged in a contest with Hrafnkel at the Thing, namely, that he had driven them all from the court in disgrace.<sup>12</sup> Sám went back to his booth; he and his kinsman were heavyhearted, fearing that their suit would fail, so that they would get nothing from it but shame and humiliation. They were so worried that they could not sleep or eat, for all the chiefs had refused to help them, including those from whom they had really expected assistance.

Old Thorbjorn woke up early one morning. He awakened Sám and asked him to get up, saying, "I can't sleep." Sám got up and put on his clothes. They went out and down to the Ax River below the bridge, and washed themselves. Thorbjorn said to Sám, "My advice is that you have our horses rounded up and we get ready to go home; it is clear now that we shall get nothing but disgrace." Sám answered, "That's fine, in view of the fact that you insisted on a suit against Hrafnkel and refused terms that many a man seeking compensation for a relative would have accepted gladly. You accused me of cowardice—and all the rest who were unwilling to go into the suit with you. Now, I shall not give it up until it seems to me beyond all expectation that I can get anything done." Thorbjorn was so moved by this that he wept. In a moment they saw five men walking away from a booth a little distance below the

10. Hrafnkel follows the usual, or southern, route from the east coast to Thingfield, the river valley where the assembly was held annually in the latter part of June. Sám takes a northern route, shorter but more difficult. Thingfield was in southwestern Iceland, about thirty miles from the present city of Reykjavik.

11. Those who attended sessions of the Thing—lasting two weeks—lived in structures somewhat like the modern tent with a wooden platform. The

assembly convened in the open at the Law Rock.

12. The functions of the Thing were both legislative and judicial—it not only enacted laws but also tried cases. But the Icelandic constitution did not provide any effective executive arm; hence coercion was a frequent element in the trial of suits, as was individual initiative in the carrying out of sentences handed down by the court. This is why Sám feels his situation hopeless unless he can get the support of powerful chiefs.

point on the river where they were sitting. The man who walked in front was tall but not thick; he wore a leaf-green kirtle and carried a sword in his hand. He was a man with regular features, a ruddy complexion, good looks, and thick blond hair. This man was easily recognized, for he had a light-colored lock of hair on the left side. Sám said, "Let's get up and go west across the river and see these men." Then they walked down the river; and the man who was in front of the group greeted them before they spoke to him; and he asked who they were. They told him, and Sám asked the man his name; he said he was Thorkel Thjostason. Sám asked what family he came from and where he lived. He said that he was a West Firther by birth and breeding and lived at Cod Firth. Sám said, "Are you a man of priestly rank?" He said definitely that he was not. "Have you an estate of your own?" said Sám. He said he did not. Sám said, "What is your situation, then?" He answered, "I am unattached; I came out here a year ago; I had been abroad seven years, having gone to Constantinople and joined the household of the king of the Greeks; but now I am living with my brother, whose name is Thorgeir." "Is he a man of priestly status?" said Sám. Thorkel answered, "Certainly, he has priestly authority around Cod Firth and elsewhere in the West Firths." "Is he here at the Thing?" said Sám. "Certainly, he is here." "How large a company has he?" "He has seventy men," said Thorkel. "Are there more brothers?" said Sám. "There is a third," said Thorkel. "Who is he?" said Sám. "His name is Thormod," said Thorkel, "and he lives at Garths in Swansness; he is married to Thordis, daughter of Thorolf Skallagrimsson of Borg." "Will you give us some assistance?" said Sám. "What do you need?" said Thorkel. "The help and support of chiefs," said Sám, "for we have a suit to carry on against Hrafnkel Priest in connection with the slaying of Einar Thorbjarnsson, and with your backing we can be sure of an opportunity to present the case properly." Thorkel answered, "As I said, I have no priestly authority." "Why are you excluded that way, when you are a chief's son like your brothers?" Thorkel said, "I didn't tell you that I had not had the rank; but I turned over my chief's authority to my brother Thorgeir before I went abroad. I have not taken it back since because I am satisfied as long as he has it in charge. Go and see him, ask him for help; he is of energetic nature, a good fellow, well endowed in every way, and a young man eager for honor; such men are the most likely to give you assistance." Sám said, "We shall get nothing from him unless you join us in asking for it." Thorkel said, "This I will promise, to be for you rather than against you, inasmuch as I think you have good cause to bring suit for the slaying of a close relative. Go ahead now to the booth, and inside it; people are sleeping there. You will see

two pallets on the far side of the booth; I got up from one, and Thorgeir, my brother, is resting on the other. He has had a big boil on his foot, since he came to the Thing, and hence has slept little at night; but it burst last night and now the core is out and he has been sleeping since. He has his foot stuck out from under the foot-board on account of the fever in the foot. Let this old man [Thorbjorn] go on inside the booth; he looks very feeble, both in eyesight and from old age in general. Then, fellow," said Thorkel to Thorbjorn, "when you come to the pallet you must stumble heavily and fall on the pallet, then take hold of the toe that is bound up and give it a jerk—and see how he takes it." Sám said, "You mean to give us good counsel, but this does not seem advisable to me." Thorkel answered, "You can take your choice: either do as I propose or do not look to me for help." Sám said to Thorbjorn, "You must do as he advises." Thorkel said he would come along later, "for I am waiting for my men."

Then Sám and Thorbjorn went along to the booth. Everybody was asleep there, and they saw at once where Thorgeir was lying. Old Thorbjorn stumbled badly as he walked, and when he came to the pallet he fell against the footboard, grasped the toe that had been inflamed, and pulled it toward him. Thorgeir awakened, jumped from the pallet, and asked who was moving about there so clumsily that he ran into people's feet that were already sore. Thorbjorn and Sám could think of nothing to say. Just then Thorkel slipped into the booth and said to his brother Thorgeir, "Don't be hasty or excited about this, kinsman, for nothing is going to harm you; things turn out worse for many people than they intend, and men are not always careful about everything when they have much on their minds. So it is an excuse for you that your foot is sore and has been very painful—that you know best yourself. Now it may be that for an old man his son's death is no less painful than to get no compensation and be lacking in everything himself. He will know his own feelings best; and it is to be expected that a man who has a great deal to worry about will not be careful about everything." Thorgeir said, "I should not have thought that he could be offended with me for that, for I did not kill his son and he cannot avenge the deed on me." "He did not mean to avenge it on you," said Thorkel; "instead, he came up to you more roughly than he intended, for which his dimness of sight is responsible; but he was expecting some assistance from you. It is a noble act, now, to aid an old and needy man. Necessity, and not avarice, leads him to bring suit for the slaying of his son. But now all the chiefs refuse support to this man and thereby show themselves very unheroic." Thorgeir said, "Against whom are these men bringing suit?" Thorkel answered, "Hrafnkel Priest has slain Thorbjorn's son with-

out cause. He commits all kinds of misdeeds against others and will give no man redress for them." Thorgeir said, "It will be with me as with others—I do not know that I have such obligations to these men as to be willing to engage in contests with Hrafnkel. As it appears to me, the same thing happens every summer to those men who take part in suits against him: most of them get little or no honor when it is all over. I see that it goes that way for everybody, and hence I think most men would be reluctant about it, unless they are compelled by necessity." Thorkel said, "It may be that, if I were a chief, I should think it bad to oppose Hrafnkel; but actually it does not look that way to me. For it would appear to me as if one were going up against the most powerful kind of opponent, by whom all had hitherto been routed; and I should think my reputation, or that of any chief who might get the better of Hrafnkel, would be greatly increased. On the other hand, it would not be diminished if things should turn out for me as they have for the rest, for 'that may happen to me which has happened to others'; and also, 'nothing ventured, nothing gained.'" "I see how you are inclined," said Thorgeir; "you want to help these men. Now I will turn over to you my priestly authority over men; you take it, as I have had it hitherto, and henceforth let us both have it equally, and you help those you wish to help." "It seems to me," said Thorkel, "that our authority would be best managed if you should keep it as long as possible. There is no one to whom I am so willing to give it, for you have many qualifications beyond your two brothers, whereas I am uncertain what I shall do with myself at present. And you know, kinsman, that I have taken little part in affairs since I came to Iceland. I can see now how my advice is rated; and now I have said my say for the time being. It may be that Thorkel Lock<sup>13</sup> will reach the point where his words are more highly valued." Thorgeir said, "Now I see what is happening, kinsman—you are displeased, and I cannot allow that; so let us go in with these men, however things turn out, if you wish it." Thorkel said, "I ask only for that which it seems to me best to grant." "How much of their suit do these men think they can handle effectively?" said Thorgeir. "As I told you to-day," said Sám, "we need backing from chiefs, but I will undertake the pleading of the case." Thorgeir said that would do well; "and now it is important to prepare the case as correctly as possible, and it seems to me, if Thorkel is willing, that you should go to see him before the court sits. In the end *you will have some solace in return for your trouble, or else more humiliation than before, besides the worry and anxiety. Go along now and don't be downhearted, for if you are going to contest*

13. A nickname, from the lock of especially light hair mentioned earlier. Names of this kind were very common;

see, for example, the list of kings at the opening of the saga.

against Hrafnkel you will need to keep up your spirits in the meantime. But don't tell anyone that we have promised you assistance." Then they went back to their booth very cheerfully. Everybody wondered why they had had a change of mood so quickly, for they had been very gloomy when they left their booth. They remained there now until the court sat.

Then Sám called his men and went to the Law Rock, where the court was in session. Sám walked boldly up to the court. He began by naming his witnesses and then presented his case against Hrafnkel Priest without error and according to the correct statutes of the land, as well as with excellent delivery. Just then Thjosti's sons arrived with a great crowd of men. All the men from the western part of the country supported them, and it appeared that Thjosti's sons were fortunate in friends. Sám prosecuted his case to the point where Hrafnkel was invited to defend himself, unless there was someone present who wished to offer a defense in his behalf according to correct legal procedure. Great applause followed Sám's speech, and no one offered to speak for the defense. Men ran to Hrafnkel's booth and told him what was going on. He sprang up quickly, called his men, and went to the court, thinking there would be few to resist him. He intended to teach little men a lesson about bringing suits against him; he was going to break up the court in Sám's presence and thus force him to give up the case. But now there was no chance of that. There was such a crowd that Hrafnkel got nowhere near; he was pushed away by a much larger force, so that he did not hear the speeches of those who were suing him. Thus it was difficult for him to offer his defense. But Sám prosecuted the case to the limit of the law, with the result that Hrafnkel was declared a full outlaw at that Thing.

Hrafnkel went at once to his booth, had his horses brought up, and rode away from the Thing ill pleased with the ending of the case, for he had never had such a thing happen before. He rode east to Heatherdale Heath, then east to Side, and did not stop till he got back home to Hrafnkelsdale. There he settled down at Adalbol and acted as though nothing had happened. Sám remained at the Thing and went about with great self-confidence. Many men thought it good that the affair had turned out that way, so that Hrafnkel suffered disgrace; they remembered that he had shown unfairness to many. Sám stayed until the Thing closed and people prepared to go home. He thanked the brothers for their support, and Thorgeir laughingly asked Sám how things were going. When he said he was well pleased with the result, Thorgeir said, "Do you think you are any better off than before?" Sám said, "I think Hrafnkel has had a humiliation that will be talked about for a long time, and that is worth a great deal of money." "A man is not a

full outlaw until a judgment of execution<sup>14</sup> is carried out; and that must be done at his home, fourteen days after the Taking Up of Weapons." The Taking Up of Weapons marks the time when everyone leaves the Thing. "But I think," said Thorgeir, "that Hrafnkel has gone home and expects to remain at Adalbol; I think he will keep his chief's authority in spite of you. You, however, may at best hope to ride home and settle down on your farm, if you can. I think you have this as the result of your suit: you can call him an outlaw. But I think he will keep most men as much intimidated as before unless you should take further steps." "I never had that in mind," said Sám. "You are a brave man," said Thorgeir, "and I believe my kinsman Thorkel is unwilling to let you down in the end. He wishes to stand by you until your quarrel with Hrafnkel is finally settled and you can live in peace. You will naturally think us the most suitable ones to assist you, since we have taken the most interest in the matter hitherto. We should go with you this once to the East Firths. Now, do you know any route to the East Firths other than the regular road?" Sám was delighted at this, and said that they would go by the same route that he had come on the way from the east.

Thorgeir chose his band of followers and took forty men with him; Sám also had forty. When they had been well equipped with weapons and horses, the whole company traveled by the same route till they reached Glaciersdale one morning at dawn and crossed the bridge over the river. This was the day on which the judgment of execution had to be carried out. Thorgeir now asked Sám how they could approach in the least expected way, and Sám said that he would know how to manage that. Then he led them off the road, up to the knoll, and then along the ridge between Hrafnkelsdale and Glaciersdale until they came to the lower slope of the mountain beneath which lies the farmstead of Adalbol. Grassy glens reached as far up as the heath, and there was a sharp descent into the dale; and there lay the farmstead below. Sám now dismounted and said, "Let us turn our horses loose, with twenty men to guard them; then sixty of us can make a dash for the house—and I think few people will be stirring." They did so, and the place has since been called Horse Glens. They ran quickly to the house; it was then six o'clock, and no one had got up. They broke in the door with a stick and rushed in. Hrafnkel was resting in his bed. They took him outside, along with all his armed servants; the women and children were driven into an outbuilding. In the yard was also a storehouse; a clothes beam reached from this to the wall of the main house. They led Hrafnkel and his men to this spot. He made many offers for

14. a legal term denoting action taken on the part of the successful plaintiff in a suit, to carry out the decision of the court.



himself and for his men, and when that did no good, he entreated for the lives of the men—"for they have done no harm to you; but it is no dishonor to me, though you kill me; I will not ask to escape that. I do ask to be spared insult; there is no honor to you in that." Thorkel said, "We have heard that you have not been gentle with your enemies, and it is well that you should feel it to-day for yourself." Then they took Hrafnkel and his men and bound their hands behind their backs. Next they broke open the storhouse and took ropes from the hooks, got out their knives, and cut holes in the tendons of the captives. They pulled the ropes through the holes, tossed the men up over the beam, and then tied the eight of them together. Then Thorgeir said, "That has now happened to you, Hrafnkel, which is just; and you must have thought it unlikely that you would ever receive such shame from any man as has now been done to you. Which do you wish to do now, Thorkel: stay here beside Hrafnkel and guard these men or go with Sám outside the yard and away, within distance of a bow-shot from the house, to carry out the judgment of execution on some stony cliff or other, where there is neither plowed field nor meadow?" At that time this had to be done when the sun was due south. Thorkel said, "I will stay here by Hrafnkel, it seems like less work." Thorgeir and Sám then went and carried out the judgment of execution. When they came back, they took down Hrafnkel and his men and placed them in the yard; their eyes were now bloodshot. Then Thorgeir told Sám that he should do with Hrafnkel as he wished, "for he does not look hard to deal with now." Sám then answered, "I give you a choice of two things, Hrafnkel: one, you and such of your men as I wish shall be led out of the yard and killed; but inasmuch as you have many family dependents to care for, I am willing to allow you to make provision for them. On the other hand, if you choose life, then leave Adalbol together with all the members of your household and take only those possessions which I assign you—which will be very little. I shall take over your homestead and all your chief's authority; neither you nor your heirs shall ever lay claim to them; and you shall come nowhere nearer than the east side of Fleetdale District. Now you can be reconciled with me if you are willing to accept these terms." Hrafnkel said, "To many a quick death would seem better than such insults; but it will go with me as with many others—I will take life, if there is a choice. I do it mostly for the sake of my sons, for their prospects will be slight if I die." Then Hrafnkel was untied, and he granted Sám the right to settle things as he wished. Sám assigned Hrafnkel such of the property as he pleased, and it was little, indeed. Hrafnkel had his spear with him, but no other weapons. That day Hrafnkel and all his people moved away from Adalbol. Thorkel then said to Sám,

"I do not know why you are doing this; you yourself will regret it most that you grant him life." Sám said that was the way it was to be.

Hrafnkel now moved his household east across Fleetdale District and beyond Fleetdale to the east of Lakefleet. At the end of the lake stood a little farmstead called Lockhill. Hrafnkel bought this land on credit, for he had no more capital than he needed for farm equipment. People talked a great deal about how his pride had fallen, and many recalled an old proverb, "Arrogance is short-lived." This property was a large forest land, of wide extent and poor in buildings, and for this reason he bought the land for a small price. Not worrying about the expense, he cut down the forest, for it was large, and built a splendid house, which has since been called Hrafnkelsstead. It has always been known as a good farmstead. For the first season Hrafnkel lived on the place with great inconvenience, but he did well with the fishing. While the house was under construction he worked very hard. Hrafnkel kept calves and kids through the winter that first season and took good care of them, so that nearly every one of his animals lived. One could almost say there were two heads to every living creature. In the summer of this year there was a great run of fish in Lakefleet. This was a great advantage for householders in the district, and it continued every summer.

Sám established his home at Adalbol as successor to Hrafnkel; soon after he made preparations for a noble feast and invited all those who had been Hrafnkel's liegemen. Sám planned to be their chief in his place. The men consented to this, although they thought it rather dubious. Thjosti's sons advised him that he should be kind, generous, and helpful to his men—a benefactor of those in need—"then they are not men if they do not stand firmly by you whenever you need anything. We give you this advice because we should like you to succeed in everything, for we think you are a fine man. Be on your guard, now, and wary, for 'it is hard to watch out for the wicked.'" Thjosti's sons had Freyfaxi and his herd sent for, saying that they wished to see these prized possessions, about which there were such tales. The horses were brought to the house and the brothers looked them over. Thorgeir said, "These horses appear to me to be serviceable on the estate; my advice is that they do such useful work as they can until they are ready to die of old age. But this stallion looks no better to me than other stallions—worse, rather, in that much evil has come about because of him. I do not wish him to be the occasion of more slayings than have already occurred; it will be proper, now, that he who owns him should take charge of him." They then led the horse down through the valley. There was a cliff along the river there, directly

above a deep place in the stream. They led the horse to this cliff, and Thjosti's sons pulled a bag over his head. They tied a stone around his neck, then took long sticks and pushed him off the cliff, and thus destroyed the horse. The place has since been called Freyfaxi's Cliff. Farther down the valley stood the temples which Hrafnkel had owned, and Thorkel wanted to go there. He gave directions to strip all the statues of the gods of their ornaments and then to set fire to the temples and burn up everything at once. Then the guests prepared to leave. Sám chose excellent presents for both brothers, and both parties promised each other loyal devotion, so they said good-bye in perfect friendship. The brothers then rode west by the regular route to the Firths and came home with honor to Cod Firth. Sám settled Thorbjorn down at Playsheds, where he was to live, and Sám and his wife moved to Adalbol and lived there for a time.

Hrafnkel, over in east Fleetdale, heard that Thjosti's sons had destroyed Freyfaxi and burned the temples. He remarked, "I think it foolishness to believe in gods," and said that henceforth he would never believe in them. He held to that, and never offered sacrifice afterward. Hrafnkel remained at Hrafnkelsstead and accumulated wealth. He soon got a great reputation in the district; everyone was eager to do as Hrafnkel wished. This was the time when the largest number of ships came from Norway to Iceland; people settled the largest part of the land in the district in Hrafnkel's day. No one could occupy land in peace unless he asked Hrafnkel's permission. They all had to promise him their support, and he promised them his protection; thus he got all the land east of Lakefleet under his control. This Thing-district soon became much bigger and more populous than the one which he had had earlier; it extended to Screddale and all along Lakefleet. By now a change had come about in his nature; the man was much better liked than before. He had the same disposition to be useful and helpful, but he was more popular, as well as milder and more reasonable in everything. Often Sám and Hrafnkel encountered each other at public meetings, but they never brought up their previous relations. Thus seven years went by. Sám was well liked by his liegemen, for he was mild and quiet and ready in helping people—he remembered the advice those brothers had given him. Incidentally, he was a great dandy.

It was reported that a ship from abroad, whose captain was Eyvind Bjarnason, had arrived at Whalefirth. Eyvind had been away seven years and had enormously improved and developed, so that he had become a very gallant man. He was quickly told what had happened at home; but, being a man of great reserve, he had little to say about it. As soon as Sám learned of his arrival, he rode down to the ship and there was a very happy meeting of the

brothers. Sám invited him to come west to his place and Eyvind agreed, but asked Sám to ride on ahead and send back horses to carry his goods. Meanwhile he hauled his ship on shore and took care of it, and Sám went home and rounded up horses to go and meet him. When Eyvind had his goods ready, he started on the journey to Hrafnkelsdale, going up along Whale Firth. There were five in Eyvind's party—and his servant made a sixth. This last was of Icelandic origin and related to Eyvind, who had rescued the boy from destitution and taken him abroad, looking out for him as carefully as for himself. This act was generally known, and it was universally agreed that there were few like Eyvind. The party rode up Thorisdale Heath, driving sixteen pack horses ahead. Two of the men were servants of Sám and three were from the ship; all were in bright clothes and had handsome shields. They rode across Screeddale and over the Ridge to the place called Bulungfields in Fleetdale, then down to Gorge River bank; this stream flows west to the lake between Hallormsstead and Hrafnkelsstead. They rode up along Lakefleet below the plain to Hrafnkelsstead, then around the end of the lake and across the Glacier River at Shed Ford. It was now about half past seven in the morning. There was a woman on the bank washing clothes, and she saw the travelers. This serving woman bundled up the laundry, ran home, threw the clothes down outside near a woodpile, and rushed inside. Hrafnkel had not yet got up, and some trusted men were lying in the hall. The working men, however, had gone to their tasks; it was the time of hay harvest. The woman began speaking as soon as she came in: "Very true it is, as was said long ago, that 'he gets slack who grows old.' The repute that was won early becomes little if a man shamefully lets himself get sluggish and has not the courage to set things right some time or other—and this is a great wonder in a man who was once brave. Now it is otherwise with those who grow up with their father and seem to you of no esteem in comparison with you. But then, when they are grown, they go from land to land and appear to be of great repute wherever they go—and so come home and look better than chiefs. Eyvind Bjarnason rode across the river here at Shed Forth with a shield so bright that the light shone from it. He is such a man that vengeance on him would be fitting." Hrafnkel got up and answered her: "Maybe what you say is all too true—not because you intend it to be agreeable. It is well now that you should have more to do: go in a hurry to Willow Plains for Hallstein's sons, Sigvat and Snorri. As them to come quickly to me with the men there who bear arms." He sent another serving woman out to Hrolfsstead for Hrolf's sons, Thord and Halla, and the men who bore arms there. All these were valiant and very capable men.

Hrafnkel also sent for his own servants; and the entire company amounted to eighteen.

Eyvind's party had now come up to the heath. Eyvind rode west till he came to a place in the middle of the heath called Bessi's Way. Here there is a marsh, with no grass at all, and it was like riding through nothing but mud that always came up to the knee or the mid-leg, sometimes to the belly. Underneath it was as hard as a stony field. There is a rocky, broken stretch to the west, and when they came to it the boy looked back and said to Eyvind, "Men are riding behind us, not less than eighteen; there is a tall man on horseback in blue clothes and he looks to me like Hrafnkel Priest, though I have not seen him for a long time." Eyvind answered, "What does it matter to us? I know of nothing to fear from Hrafnkel's riding; I have not done anything against him. Doubtless he has an appointment to meet his friends west in the Dale." The boy answered, "I still think it is you that he wants to meet." Eyvind said, "I don't know of anything that has happened between him and my brother Sám since they were reconciled." The boy answered, "I wish you would ride away west to the Dale; then you will be safe. I know Hrafnkel's nature; he will do nothing to us if he cannot get you. Everything is taken care of if you are, for then there is no animal in the trap;<sup>15</sup> and it will be all right, whatever happens to us." Eyvind said he would not ride away in a hurry, "for I don't know who these men are, it would seem laughable to many a man if I ran away without finding out something." They rode west then from the rocky strip and there was another marsh in front of them, called Ox Marsh. It is covered with grass, but there are quicksands, so that it is almost impassable; that is why old Hallfred built the upper road, longer though it was. Eyvind rode west to the marsh, and the horses sank deep in the mire, which delayed them a good deal. Hrafnkel's party, without packs on their horses, followed rapidly and came along to the marsh. Eyvind's party had not got through the marsh; they could see Hrafnkel and both his sons. Eyvind's men then asked him to ride off: "All the bad spots are now passed; you can get to Adalbol while the marsh is between them and you." Eyvind answered, "I will not flee from these men, for I have done them no harm." His party rode then up to the ridge. Moderate-sized peaks rise from the ridge, and on one of the slopes is a bit of turf, bare and windblown, surrounded by high banks. Eyvind rode to the spot and dismounted to wait for the pursuers, remarking, "Now we will soon know their business." Then he and his men walked up to the turf and broke

15. a proverbial expression, like our "nothing is at stake"; Hrafnkel is interested only in Eyvind.

up some stones. Hrafnkel then turned south off the road toward the turf. He exchanged no words with Eyvind, but attacked at once. Eyvind defended himself well and bravely. His servant, thinking himself inadequate to the fight, got his horse, rode west over the ridge to Adalbol, and told Sám what was going on. Sám got up quickly and sent for men. This company numbered twenty men, well equipped. Sám rode east on the heath to the site of the battle, which was now finished—and Hrafnkel had ridden away east. Eyvind and all his men had fallen. First of all, Sám looked for signs of life in his brother; but he was done for, and all five lay dead together. Twelve of Hrafnkel's men had also fallen, but six survivors had left the scene. Sám tarried only a little, and told his men to follow at once. Hrafnkel's party had ridden away as fast as they could, and now their horses would be tired. Sám declared, "We can catch them, for they have tired horses but ours are all fresh; it will be a near thing whether we catch them before they get off the heath." Hrafnkel had now gone east across Ox Marsh, and both parties rode along until Sám came to the edge of the heath. Then he saw that Hrafnkel had gone farther down into the slopes and that he would make good his escape into the district below. Sám then said, "Here we will turn back, for it will be easy for Hrafnkel to get men." In this situation, then, Sám went back to the place where Eyvind lay and set to work heaping up a burial mound over him and his fellows. These sites are now called Eyvind's Knoll, Eyvind's Fells, and Eyvind's Dale. Sám then took all Eyvind's goods home to Adalbol. When he arrived, he sent for his liegemen to come there next morning about nine o'clock, planning to ride west across the heath—"let the journey turn out as it may." In the evening Sám went to bed, there being a number of men on hand.

Hrafnkel rode home and told the news. He ate a meal and then summoned men, so that he got together a company of seventy. With these he rode west across the heath, arrived unexpectedly at Adalbol, took Sám in his bed, and led him out. Then Hrafnkel said, "Now something has happened to you, Sám, that you must have thought unlikely for some time—I have your life in my power. I shall not treat you worse than you did me. I offer you a choice of two things: to be killed or to let me fix and settle the terms between us." Sám said that he would choose to live; but he said he thought either choice would be hard. Hrafnkel said that he could expect it—"for we have that to pay you back. I should treat you twice as well if you deserved it. You shall leave Adalbol and go down to Playsheds to live. You shall take with you the property that Eyvind owned. You shall not remove from here anything except that which you have brought—all of that you shall take with you. I will take over my chief's authority, as well as the house and homestead. I see there

has been a great increase in my property, and you shall not have the benefit of that. No compensation shall be paid for your brother Eyvind, because you ruthlessly prosecuted the case of Einar, your earlier kinsman, and have had sufficient compensation in that you have had power and property for six years. The killing of Eyvind and his men does not appear to me worth more than the maiming of me and my men. You made me a fugitive from the district, but I shall be pleased to have you live at Playsheds; and that will do well, if you are not too arrogant for your own good. You shall be my subordinate as long as we both live. You may also expect to fare worse if there is any more trouble between us." Sám then left with his company for Playsheds and went to live there.

Hrafnkel then arranged the household at Adalbol with his own men. His son, Thorir, he established at Hrafnkelsstead. Hrafnkel now had chief's authority in all the settlements. His son Asbjorn remained with his father, for he was younger. Sám stayed at Playsheds that winter, glum and silent. Many discovered that he was a little pleased with his lot. But in the course of the winter, when the days grew longer, Sám, with another man and three horses between them, went across the river, thence over Madderdale Heath, then across the Glacier River up on the mountain; then to Midge Lake, and from there across Fleet Heath and Clear Lake Pass. He did not stop till he reached Cod Firth in the west, where he was well received. Thorkel had just recently returned from his travels; he had been abroad four years. When Sám had rested for a week, he told the brothers of the affair with Hrafnkel and asked for their aid and support as before. This time Thorgeir did more of the talking for the brothers. He said it was out of the question—"we are far away.<sup>16</sup> We thought we had put you in good shape before we left, so that it would be easy for you to maintain yourself. It has turned out as I anticipated at the time when you granted Hrafnkel life, namely, that you would regret it most. We urged you to take his life, but you wanted to have your way. It is easy to see now what difference in sense there has been between you and him—since he let you live in peace and waited for the time when he could dispose of the man that he thought bigger than you. We cannot meddle in this lucklessness of yours; and we have no incentive to oppose Hrafnkel great enough to make us risk our reputation a second time. But we will invite you to move here under our protection, with your entire household, if you think it less vexatious than living near Hrafnkel." Sám said he did not care for that, but wished to go back home. He asked them to swap horses with him, and this was readily arranged. The brothers wanted to give Sám good gifts, but he would

16. Cod Firth, where Thorgeir and Thorkel live, is on the northwestern peninsula of Iceland; Sám and Hrafnkel live near the east coast.

accept none, saying that they were mean-spirited men. In this situation he rode home and lived on there till old age. He never got the advantage of Hrafnkel as long as he lived. Hrafnkel remained on his estate and kept up his repute. He died of illness, and his burial mound is in Hrafnkelsdalc out from Adalbol; in the grave beside him was laid much money, along with all his armor and his good spear. His sons took over his chief's authority. Thorir lived at Hrafnkelsstead, Asbjorn at Adalbol; they held the priesthood together and both were considered important men. Thus ends the story of Hrafnkel.

### Song of Roland (Chanson de Roland)\*

#### 1

The king, our Emperor Carlemaine,  
 Hath been for seven full years in Spain.  
 From highland to sea hath he won the land;  
 City was none might his arm withstand;  
 Keep and castle alike went down— 5  
 Save Saragossa, the mountain town.  
 The King Marsilius holds the place,  
 Who loveth not God, nor seeks His grace:  
 He prays to Apollin, and serves Mahound;  
 But he saved him not from the fate he found. 10

#### 2

In Saragossa King Marsil made  
 His council-seat in the orchard shade,  
 On a stair of marble of azure hue.  
 There his courtiers round him drew;  
 While there stood, the king before, 15  
 Twenty thousand men and more.  
 Thus to his dukes and his counts he said,  
 "Hear ye, my lords, we are sore bested.  
 The Emperor Karl of gentle France  
 Hither hath come for our dire mischance. 20  
 Nor host to meet him in battle line,  
 Nor power to shatter his power, is mine.  
 Speak, my sages; your counsel lend:

\* Abridged. Apparently composed early in the twelfth century. From *The Song of Roland*, translated by John O'Hagan. First American edition from the second London edition.

1. *Carlemaine*: Charlemagne (Charles the Great).

5. *Keep*: fortress.

6. *Saragossa*: city in Aragon, on the

Ebro River.

9. *Apollin*: the Greek god Apollo; but the poet is mistaken, for the Mohammedans were monotheists, recognizing only the god Allah. *Mahound*: Mohammed, prophet of the god Allah and founder of the Mohammedan religion.

19. *Karl*: Charles, the Emperor.



My doom of shame and death forefend."  
 But of all the heathens none spake word  
 Save Blancandrin, Val Fonde's lord.

25

## 3

Blancandrin was a heathen wise,  
 Knightly and valiant of enterprise,  
 Sage in counsel his lord to aid;  
 And he said to the king, "Be not dismayed:  
 Proffer to Karl, the haughty and high,  
 Lowly friendship and fealty;  
 Ample largess lay at his feet,  
 Bear and lion and greyhound fleet.  
 Seven hundred camels his tribute be,  
 A thousand hawks that have moulted free.  
 Let full four hundred mules be told,  
 Laden with silver cnow and gold  
 For fifty wagons to bear away;  
 So shall his soldiers receive their pay.  
 Say, too long hath he warred in Spain,—  
 Let him turn to France—to his Aix—again.  
 At Saint Michael's feast you will thither speed,  
 Bend your heart to the Christian creed,  
 And his liegeman be in duty and deed.  
 Hostages he may demand  
 Ten or twenty at your hand.  
 We will send him the sons whom our wives have nursed;  
 Were death to follow, mine own the first.  
 Better by far that they there should die  
 Than be driven all from our land to fly,  
 Flung to dishonor and beggary.

30

35

40

45

50

## 4

"Yea," said Blancandrin, "by this right hand,  
 And my floating beard by the free wind fanned,  
 Ye shall see the host of the Franks disband  
 And hie them back into France their land;  
 Each to his home as beseemeth well,  
 And Karl unto Aix—to his own Chapelle.  
 He will hold high feast on Saint Michael's day  
 And the time of your tryst shall pass away.  
 Tale nor tidings of us shall be;  
 Fiery and sudden, I know, is he:  
 He will smite off the heads of our hostages all:  
 Better, I say, that their heads should fall

55

60

38. *enow*: enough.42. *Aix*: Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen),  
in the Rhineland, used by Charles as a

kind of capital.

43. *Saint Michael's feast*: September  
29.

Than we the fair land of Spain forego, 65  
 And our lives be laden with shame and woe."  
 "Yea," said the heathens, "it may be so."

## 7

Then King Marsil bade be dight  
 Ten fair mules of snowy white,  
 Erst from the King of Sicily brought 70  
 Their trappings with silver and gold inwrought—  
 Gold the bridle, and silver the selle.  
 On these are the messengers mounted well;  
 And they ride with olive boughs in hand,  
 To seek the Lord of the Frankish land.  
 Well let him watch; he shall be trepanned. 75

## 8

King Karl is jocund and gay of mood,  
 He hath Cordres city at last subdued;  
 Its shattered walls and turrets fell  
 By catapult and mangonel; 80  
 Not a heathen did there remain  
 But confessed him Christian or else was slain.  
 The Emperor sits in an orchard wide,  
 Roland and Olivier by his side:  
 Samson the duke, and Anscis proud; 85  
 Geoffrey of Anjou, whose arm was vowed  
 The royal gonfalon to rear;  
 Gerein, and his fellow in arms, Grier;  
 With them many a gallant lance,  
 Full fifteen thousand of gentle France. 90  
 The cavaliers sit upon carpets white,  
 Playing at tables for their delight:  
 The older and sager sit at the chess,  
 The bachelors fence with a light address.  
 Seated underneath a pine, 95  
 Close beside an eglantine,  
 Upon a throne of beaten gold,  
 The lord of ample France behold;  
 White his hair and beard were seen,  
 Fair of body, and proud of mien, 100

68. *Marsil*: the Mohammedan king of Saragossa. *bade be dight*: ordered to be prepared.

70. *Erst*: first.

72. *selle*: saddle.

76. *trepanned*: tricked, deceived.

78. *Cordres city*: the city of Cordova.

80. *mangonel*: a device used to hurl heavy stones.

87. *gonfalon*: the imperial standard or banner.

92. *tables*: a game somewhat like backgammon.

Who sought him needed not ask, I ween.  
The ten alight before his feet,  
And him in all observance greet.

12

Under a pine is the Emperor gone,  
And his barons to council come forth anon: 105  
Archbishop Turpin, Duke Ogier bold  
With his nephew Henry was Richard the old,  
Gascony's gallant Count Acelin,  
Tybalt of Rheims, and Milo his kin,  
Gerein and his brother in arms, Gercier, 110  
Count Roland and his faithful fere,  
The gentle and valiant Olivier:  
More than a thousand Franks of France.  
And Ganelon came, of woeful chance;  
By him was the deed of treason done. 115  
So was the fatal consult begun.

13

"Lords my barons," the Emperor said,  
"King Marsil to me hath his envoys sped.  
He proffers treasure surpassing bounds,  
Bears and lions, and leashed hounds; 120  
Seven hundred camels that bend the knee;  
A thousand hawks that have moulted free;  
Four hundred mules with Arab gold,  
Which fifty wains might scanty hold.  
But he saith to France must I wend my way: 125  
He will follow to Aix with brief delay,  
Bend his heart unto Christ's belief,  
And hold his marches of me in fief;  
Yet I know not what in his heart may lie."  
"Beware! beware!" was the Franks' outcry. 130

14

Scarce his speech did the Emperor close,  
When in high displeasure Count Roland rose,  
Fronted his uncle upon the spot,  
And said, "This Marsil, believe him not:  
Seven full years have we warred in Spain; 135  
Commibles and Noples for you have I ta'en,  
Tudela and Sebilie, cities twain;  
Valtierra I won, and the land of Pine,

111. *fere*: companion.

124. *wains*: wagons.

128. *marches: lands. in fief*: as a vassal.

And Balaguet fell to this arm of mine.  
 King Marsil hath ever a traitor been: 140  
 He sent of his heathens, at first fifteen,  
 Bearing each one an olive bough,  
 Speaking the self-same words as now.  
 Into council with your Franks you went,  
 Lightly they flattered your heart's intent; 145  
 Two of your barons to him you sent,—  
 They were Basan and Basil, the brother knights:  
 He smote off their heads on Haltoia's heights.  
 War, I say!—end as you well began,  
 Unto Saragossa lead on your van; 150  
 Were the siege to last your lifetime through,  
 Avenge the nobles this felon slew."

## 15

The Empercor bent him and mused within,  
 Twisted his beard upon lip and chin,  
 Answered his nephew nor good nor ill; 155  
 And the Franks, save Ganelon, all were still:  
 Hastily to his feet he sprang,  
 Haughtily his words outrang:—  
 "By me or others be not misled,—  
 Look to your own good ends," he said. 160  
 "Since now King Marsil his faith assures,  
 That, with hands together clasped in yours,  
 He will henceforth your vassal be,  
 Receive the Christian law as we,  
 And hold his realm of you in fee, 165  
 Whoso would treaty like this deny,  
 Recks not, sire, by what death we die:  
 Good never came from counsel of pride,—  
 List to the wise, and let madmen bide."

## 16

Then his form Duke Naimés upreared, 170  
 White of hair and hoary of beard.  
 Better vassal in court was none.  
 "You have hearkened," he said, "unto Ganelon,  
 Well hath Count Ganelon made reply;  
 Wise are his words, if you bide thereby. 175  
 King Marsil is beaten and broken in war;  
 You have captured his castles anear and far,  
 With your engines shattered his walls amain,  
 His cities burned, his soldiers slain:

Respite and ruth if he now implore, 180  
 Sin it were to molest him more.  
 Let his hostages vouch for the faith he plights,  
 And send him one of your Christian knights.  
 'T were time this war to an ending came."  
 "Well saith the duke!" the Franks exclaim. 185

20

"My cavaliers," he began anew,  
 "Choose of my marches a baron true,  
 Before King Marsil my hest to do."  
 "Be it, then," said Roland, "my stepsire Gan,  
 In vain ye seek for a meeter man." 190  
 The Franks exclaim, "He is worth the trust,  
 So it please the king it is right and just."  
 Count Ganelon then was with anguish wrung,  
 His mantle of fur from his neck he flung,  
 Stood all stark in his silken vest, 195  
 And his grey eyes gleamed with a fierce unrest.  
 Fair of body and large of limb,  
 All in wonderment gazed on him.  
 "Thou madman," thus he to Roland cried,  
 "What may this rage against me betide? 200  
 I am thy stepsire, as all men know,  
 And thou doom'st me on hest like this to go;  
 But so God my safe return bestow,  
 I promise to work thee scathe and strife  
 Long as thou breathest the breath of life." 205  
 "Pride and folly!" said Roland, then:  
 "Am I known to reck of the threats of men?  
 But this is work for the sagest head.  
 So it please the king, I will go instead."

21

"In my stead?—never, of mine accord. 210  
 Thou art not my vassal nor I thy lord.  
 Since Karl commands me his hest to fill,  
 Unto Saragossa ride forth I will;  
 Yct I fear me to wreak some deed of ill,  
 Thereby to slake this passion's might." 215  
 Roland listened, and laughed outright.

186. *he*: Charles, the Emperor.  
 188. *hest*: bidding.  
 190. *meeter*: more suitable.  
 204. *scathe*: harm.

207. *reck of*: pay attention to.  
 214-215. *Yet . . . might*: a fore-  
 shadowing of Ganelon's plot against Ro-  
 land.

22

At Roland's laughter Count Ganelon's pain  
 Was as though his bosom were cleft in twain.  
 He turned to his stepson as one distraught:  
 "I do not love thee," he said, "in aught;  
 Thou hast false judgment against me wrought.  
 O righteous Emperor, here I stand  
 To execute your high command."

24

"Fair Sir Gan," the Emperor spake,  
 "This my message to Marsil take: 225  
 He shall make confession of Christ's belief,  
 And I yield him, full half of Spain in fief;  
 In the other half shall Count Roland reign.  
 If he choose not the terms I now ordain,  
 I will march unto Saragossa's gate, 230  
 Besiege and capture the city straight,  
 Take and bind him both hands and feet,  
 Lead to him Aix, to my royal seat,  
 There to be tried and judged and slain,  
 Dying a death of disgrace and pain. 235  
 I have sealed the scroll of my command.  
 Deliver it into the heathen's hand.

25

"Gan," said the Emperor, "draw thou near:  
 Take my glove and my bâton here;  
 On thee did the choice of thy fellows fall." 240  
 "Sire, 't was Roland who wrought it all.  
 I shall not love him while life may last,  
 Nor Olivier his comrade fast,  
 Nor the peers who cherish and prize him so,—  
 Gage of defiance to all I throw." 245  
 Saith Karl, "Thine anger hath too much sway.  
 Since I ordain it, thou must obey."  
 "I go, but warranty none have I  
 That I may not like Basil and Basan dic."

[After due preparation, Ganelon and Blancandrin set off on the  
 journey to King Marsil at Saragossa.]

30

Said Blancandrin, "Your Franks are high of fame, 250  
 But your dukes and counts are sore to blame.  
 Such counsel to their lord they give,

Nor he nor others in peace may live.”  
 Ganelon answered, “I know of none,  
 Save Roland, who thus to his shame hath done. 255  
 Last morn the Emperor sat in the shade,  
 His nephew came in his mail arrayed,—  
 He had plundered Carcassonne just before,  
 And a vermeil apple in hand he bore:  
 ‘Sire,’ he said, ‘to your feet I bring 260  
 The crown of every earthly king.’  
 Disaster is sure such pride to blast;  
 He setteth his life on a daily cast.  
 Were he slain, we all should have peace at last.”

32

Thus Blancandrin and Ganelon rode, 265  
 ‘Till each on other his faith bestowed  
 That Roland should be by practise slain,  
 And so they journeyed by path and plain,  
 Till in Saragossa they bridle drew,  
 There alighted beneath a yew. 270  
 In a pine-tree’s shadow a throne was set;  
 Alexandrian silk was the coverlet:  
 There the monarch of Spain they found,  
 With twenty thousand Saracens round,  
 Yet from them came nor breath nor sound; 275  
 All for the tidings they strained to hear,  
 As they saw Blancandrin and Ganelon near.

34

Gan had bethought him, and mused with art;  
 Well was he skilled to play his part;  
 And he said to Marsil, “May God you save, 280  
 The Glory of God, whose grace we crave!  
 Thus saith the noble Carlemaine:  
 You shall make in Christ confession plain.  
 And he gives you in fief full half of Spain;  
 The other half shall be Roland’s share 285  
 (Right haughty partner, he yields you there);  
 And should you slight the terms I bear,  
 He will come and gird Saragossa round,  
 You shall be taken by force and bound,

267. *practise*: plan or conspiracy. with much of the Mediterranean world,  
 274. *Saracens*: the Mohammedan in the seventh century.  
 people who had conquered Spain, along

Led unto Aix, to his royal seat,  
 There to perish by judgment meet,  
 Dying a villainous death of shame."  
 Over King Marsil a horror came;  
 He grasped his javelin, plumed with gold,  
 In act to smite, were he not controlled.

## 36

The noblest Saracens thronged amain,  
 Scated the king on his throne again,  
 And the Algalif said, "'T was a sorry prank,  
 Raising your weapon to slay the Frank.  
 It was yours to hearken in silence there." 300  
 "Sir," said Gan, "I may meetly bear,  
 But for all the wealth of your land arrayed,  
 For all the gold that God hath made,  
 Would I not live and leave unsaid,  
 What Karl, the mightiest king below, 305  
 Sends, through me, to his mortal foe."  
 His mantle of fur, that was round him twined,  
 With silk of Alexandria lined,  
 Down at Blancandrin's feet he cast,  
 But still he held by his good sword fast, 310  
 Grasping the hilt by its golden ball.  
 "A noble knight," say the heathens all.

## 37

Ganelon came to the king once more.  
 "Your anger," he said, "misserves you sore,  
 As the princely Carlemaine saith, I say, 315  
 You shall the Christian law obey.  
 And half of Spain you shall hold in fee,  
 The other half shall Count Roland's be,  
 (And a haughty partner 't is yours to see).  
 Reject the treaty I here propose, 320  
 Round Saragossa his lines will close;  
 You shall be bound in fetters strong,  
 Led to his city of Aix along.  
 Nor steed nor palfrey shall you bestride,  
 Nor mule nor jennet be yours to ride; 325  
 On a sorry sumpter you shall be cast,  
 And your head by doom stricken off at last.

298. *Algalif*: a high-ranking official.  
 301. *meetly*: suitably.

314. *sore*: badly.  
 326. *sumpter*: pack-horse.



So is the Emperor's mandate traced,"—  
And the scroll in the heathen's hand he placed.

39

Into his orchard King Marsil stepped. 330  
His nobles round him their station kept:  
There was Jurfaiez, his son and heir,  
Blancandrin of the hoary hair,  
The Algalif, truest of all his kin.  
Said Blancandrin, "Summon the Christian in; 335  
His troth he pledged me upon our side."  
"Go," said Marsil, "be thou his guide."  
Blancandrin led him, hand in hand,  
Before King Marsil's face to stand;  
Then was the villainous treason planned. 340

40

"Fair Sir Ganelon," spake the king,  
"I did a rash and despighteous thing,  
Raising against thee mine arm to smite.  
Richly will I the wrong requite.  
See these sables whose worth were told 345  
At full five hundred pounds of gold:  
Thine shall they be ere the coming day."  
"I may not," said Gan, "your grace gainsay.  
God in his pleasure will you repay."

42

The heathen said, "I marvel sore 350  
Of Carlemaine, so old and hoar,  
Who counts I ween two hundred years,  
Hath borne such strokes of blades and spears,  
So many lands hath overrun,  
So many mighty kings undone, 355  
When will he tire of war and strife?"  
"Not while his nephew breathes in life.  
Beneath the cope of heaven this day  
Such vassal leads not king's array.  
Gallant and sage is Olivier, 360  
And all the twelve, to Karl so dear,  
With twenty thousand Franks in van,  
He feareth not the face of man."

43

"Strange," said Marsil, "seems to me,  
 Karl, so white with eld is he, 365  
 Twice a hundred years, men say,  
 Since his birth have passed away.  
 All his wars in many lands,  
 All the strokes of trenchant brands,  
 All the kings despoiled and slain,— 370  
 When will he from war refrain?"  
 "Not till Roland breathes no more,  
 For from hence to eastern shore,  
 Where is chief with him may vie?  
 Olivier his comrades by, 375  
 And the peers, of Karl the pride,  
 Twenty thousand Franks beside,  
 Vanguard of his host, and flower:  
 Karl may mock at mortal power."

44

"I tell thee, Sir Gan, that a power is mine; 380  
 Fairer did never in armour shine,  
 Four hundred thousand cavaliers,  
 With the Franks of Karl to measure spears."  
 "Fling such folly," said Gan, "away;  
 Sorely your heathen would rue the day. 385  
 Proffer the Emperor ample prize,  
 A sight to dazzle the Frankish eyes;  
 Send him hostages full a score,  
 So returns he to France once more.  
 But his rear will tarry behind the host; 390  
 There, I trow, will be Roland's post—  
 There will Sir Olivier remain.  
 Harken to me, and the counts lie slain;  
 The pride of Karl shall be crushed that day,  
 And his wars be ended with you for aye." 395

45

"Speak, then, and tell me, Sir Gancelon,  
 How may Roland to death be done?"  
 "Through Cizra's pass will the Emperor wind,  
 But his rear will linger in march behind;  
 Roland and Olivier there shall be, 400  
 With twenty thousand in company.  
 Muster your battle against them then,

365. *eld*: age.369. *trenchant brands*: cutting blades.390. *rear*: the rear guard of his army

A hundred thousand heathen men.  
 Till worn and spent be the Frankish bands,  
 Though your bravest perish beneath their hands. 405  
 For another battle your powers be massed,  
 Roland will sink, overcome at last.  
 There were a feat of arms indeed,  
 And your life from peril henceforth freed.

46  
 "For whoso Roland to death shall bring, 410  
 From Karl his good right arm will wring,  
 The marvellous host will melt away,  
 No more shall he muster a like array,  
 And the mighty land will in peace repose."  
 King Marsil heard him to the close; 415  
 Then kissed him on the neck, and bade  
 His royal treasure be displayed.

47  
 What said they more? Why tell the rest?  
 Said Marsil, "Fastest bound is best;  
 Come, swear me here to Roland's fall." 420  
 "Your will," said Gan, "be mine in all."  
 He swore on the relics in the hilt  
 Of his sword Murgleis, and crowned his guilt.

53  
 On Ganelon's shoulder King Marsil leant.  
 "Thou art sage," he said, "and of gallant bent; 425  
 But by all thy holiest law deems dear,  
 Let not thy thought from our purpose veer.  
 'Ten mules' burthen I give to thee  
 Of gold, the finest of Araby;  
 Nor ever year henceforth shall pass 430  
 But it brings thee riches in equal mass.  
 Take the keys of my city gates,  
 Take the treasure that Karl awaits—  
 Render them all; but oh, decide  
 That Roland in the rear-guard bide; 435  
 So may I find him by pass or height.  
 As I swear to meet him in mortal fight."  
 Cried Gan, "Mescemeth too long we stay,"  
 Sprang on his charger and rode away.

55

The Emperor rose with the day dawn clear, 440  
 Failed not Matins and Mass to hear,  
 Sate at his tent on the fair green sward,  
 Roland and Olivier nigh their lord,  
 Duke Naimes and all his peers of fame.  
 Can the felon, the perjured, came— 445  
 False was the treacherous tale he gave,—  
 And these his words, "May God you save!  
 I bear you Saragossa's keys,  
 Vast the treasure I bring with these,  
 And twenty hostages; guard them well, 450  
 The noble Marsil bids me tell—  
 Not on him shall your anger fall,  
 If I fetch not the Algalif here withal;  
 For mine eyes beheld, beneath their ken,  
 Three hundred thousand armed men, 455  
 With sword and casque and coat of mail,  
 Put forth with him on the sea to sail,  
 All for hate of the Christian creed,  
 Which they would neither hold nor heed,  
 They had not floated a league but four, 460  
 When a tempest down on their galleys bore.  
 Drowned they lie to be seen no more.  
 If the Algalif were but living wight,  
 He had stood this morn before your sight.  
 Sire, for the Saracen king I say, 465  
 Ere ever a month shall pass away,  
 On into France he will follow free,  
 Bend to our Christian law the knee,  
 Homage swear for his Spanish land,  
 And hold the realm at your command." 470  
 "Now praise to God," the Emperor said,  
 "And thanks, my Ganelon, well you sped."  
 A thousand clarions then resound,  
 The sumpter-mules are girt on ground,  
 For France, for France the Franks are bound. 475

59

The night wore by, the day dawn glowed,  
 Proudly the Emperor rose and rode,  
 Keenly and oft his host he scanned.  
 "Lords, my barons, survey this land,

474. *The sumpter-mules . . . ground*: The pack-mules are loaded on the spot.

See the passes so straight and steep: 480  
 To whom shall I trust the rear to keep?"  
 "To my stepson Roland!" Count Gan replied.  
 "Knight like him have you none beside."  
 The Emperor heard him with moody brow.  
 "A living demon," he said, "art thou; 485  
 Some mortal rage hath thy soul possessed.  
 To head my vanguard, who then were best?"  
 "Ogier," he answered, "the gallant Dane,  
 Braver baron will none remain."

60

Roland, when thus the choice he saw, 490  
 Spake, full knightly, by knightly law:  
 "Sir Stepsire, well may I hold thee dear,  
 That thou hast named me to guard the rear;  
 Karl shall not lose, if I take heed,  
 Charger, or palfrey, or mule or steed, 495  
 Hackney or sumpter that groom may lead;  
 The reason else our swords shall tell."  
 "It is sooth," said Gan, "and I know it well."

63

But soon Duke Naimcs doth by him stand—  
 No better vassal in all his band. 500  
 "You have seen and heard it all, O sire,  
 Count Roland waxeth much in ire,  
 On him the choice for the rear-guard fell,  
 And where is baron could speed so well?  
 Yield him the bow that your arm hath bent, 505  
 And let good succor to him be lent."  
 The Emperor reached it forth, and lo!  
 He gave, and Roland received, the bow.

64

"Fair Sir Nephew, I tell thee free.  
 Half of my host will I leave with thee." 510  
 "God be my judge," was the count's reply,  
 "If ever I thus my race belie.  
 But twenty thousand with me shall rest,  
 Bravest of all your Franks and best;  
 The mountain passes in safety tread, 515  
 While I breathe in life you have nought to dread."

## 66

Roland hath mounted his charger on;  
 Sir Olivier to his side hath gone;  
 Gerein and his fellow in arms, Gerier;  
 Otho the Count, and Berengier, 520  
 Samson, and with him Anseis old,  
 Gerard of Roussillon, the bold.  
 Thither the Gascon Engelier sped;  
 "I go," said Turpin, "I pledge my head";  
 "And I with thee," Count Walter said;  
 "I am Roland's man, to his service bound." 525  
 So twenty thousand knights were found.

## 69

High were the peaks, and the valleys deep,  
 The mountains wondrous dark and steep;  
 Sadly the Franks through the passes wound, 530  
 Full fifteen leagues did their tread resound.  
 To their own great land they are drawing nigh,  
 And they look on the fields of Gascony.  
 They think of their homes and their manors there,  
 Their gentle spouses and damsels fair. 535  
 Is none but for pity the tear lets fall;  
 But the anguish of Karl is beyond them all.  
 His sister's son at the gates of Spain  
 Smites on his heart, and he weeps amain.

## 72

Up to King Marsil his nephew rode, 540  
 With a mule for steed, and a staff for goad:  
 Free and joyous his accents fell,  
 "Fair Sir King, I have served you well.  
 So let my toils and my perils tell.  
 I have fought and vanquished for you in field. 545  
 One good boon for my service yield,—  
 Be it mine on Roland to strike the blow;  
 At point of lance will I lay him low;  
 And so Mohammed to aid me deign,  
 Free will I sweep the soil of Spain, 550  
 From the gorge of Aspra to Dourestan,  
 Till Karl grows weary such wars to plan.  
 Then for your life have you won repose."



He will bid his legions backward bend,  
And all his barons their aid will lend." 590

"Now God forbid it, for very shame,  
That for me my kindred were stained with blame,  
Or that gentle France to such vileness fell:  
This good sword that hath served me well, 595  
My Durindana such strokes shall deal,  
That with blood encrimsoned shall be the steel.  
By their evil star are the felons led;  
They shall all be numbered among the dead."

88

"Roland, Roland, yet wind one blast!  
Karl will hear ere the gorge be passed, 600  
And the Franks return on their path full fast."

"I will not sound on mine ivory horn:  
It shall never be spoken of me in scorn,  
That for heathen felons one blast I blew; 605  
I may not dishonor my lineage true.  
But I will strike, ere this fight be o'er,  
A thousand strokes and seven hundred more,  
And my Durindana shall drip with gore.  
Our Franks will bear them like vassals brave. 610  
The Saracens flock but to find a grave."

89

"I deem of neither reproach or stain.  
I have seen the Saracen host of Spain,  
Over plain and valley and mountain spread,  
And the regions hidden beneath their tread. 615  
Countless the swarm of the foe, and we  
A marvellous little company."  
Roland answered him, "All the more  
My spirit within me burns therefore.  
God and his angels of heaven defend 620  
That France through me from her glory bend.  
Death were better than fame laid low.  
Our Emperor loveth a downright blow."

90

Roland is daring and Olivier wise,  
Both of marvellous high emprise; 625  
On their chargers mounted, and girt in mail,  
To the death in battle they will not quail.  
Brave are the counts, and their words are high,  
And the Pagans are fiercely riding nigh.  
"See, Roland, see them, how close they are, 630



The Saracen foemen, and Karl how far!  
 Thou didst disdain on thy horn to blow.  
 Were the king but here we were spared this woe.  
 Look up through Aspra's dread defile,  
 Where standeth our doomed rear-guard the while; 635  
 They will do their last brave feat this day,  
 No more to mingle in mortal fray."  
 "Hush!" said Roland, "the craven tale—  
 Foul fall who carries a heart so pale;  
 Foot to foot shall we hold the place, 640  
 And rain our buffets and blows apace."

## 92

Archbishop Turpin, above the rest,  
 Spurred his steed to a jutting crest.  
 His sermon thus to the Franks he spake:—  
 "Lords, we are here for our monarch's sake; 645  
 Hold we for him, though our death should come;  
 Fight for the succor of Christendom.  
 The battle approaches—ye know it well,  
 For ye see the ranks of the infidel.  
 Cry *mea culpa*, and lowly kneel; 650  
 I will assoil you, your souls to heal.  
 In death ye are holy martyrs crowned."  
 The Franks alighted, and knelt on ground;  
 In God's high name the host he blessed,  
 And for penance gave them—to smite their best. 655

## 93

The Franks arose from bended knee,  
 Assoiled, and from their sins set free;  
 The archbishop blessed them fervently;  
 Then each one sprang on his bounding barb, 660  
 Armed and laced in knightly garb,  
 Apparelled all for the battle line.  
 At last said Roland, "Companion mine,  
 Too well the treason is now displayed,  
 How Ganelon hath our band betrayed.  
 To him the gifts and treasures fell, 665  
 But our Emperor will avenge us well.  
 King Marsil deemeth us bought and sold;  
 The price shall be with our good swords told."

650. *mea culpa*: literally, "my guilt"; the archbishop is calling on them to make confession.

651. *assoil*: absolve of sin.  
 659. *barb*: Barbary steed.

94

Roland rideth the passes through,  
 On Veillantif, his charger true; 670  
 Girt in his harness that shone full fair,  
 And baron-like his lance he bare.  
 The steel erect in the sunshine gleamed,  
 With the snow-white pennon that from it streamed;  
 The golden fringes beat on his hand. 675  
 Joyous of visage was he, and bland,  
 Exceeding beautiful of frame;  
 And his warriors hailed him with glad acclaim.  
 Proudly he looked on the heathen ranks,  
 Humbly and sweetly upon his Franks. 680  
 Courtcously spake he, in words of grace—  
 "Ride, my barons, at gentle pace.  
 The Saracens here to their slaughter toil:  
 Reap we, to-day, a glorious spoil,  
 Never fell to Monarch of France the like." 685  
 At his word, the hosts are in act to strike.

95

Said Olivier, "Idle is speech, I trow;  
 Thou didst disdain on thy horn to blow.  
 Succor of Karl is far apart;  
 Our strait he knows not, the noble heart: 690  
 Not to him nor his host be blame;  
 Therefore, barons, in God's good name,  
 Press ye onward, and strike your best,  
 Make your stand on this field to rest;  
 Think but of blows, both to give and take, 695  
 Never the watchword of Karl forsake."  
 Then from the Franks resounded high—  
 "*Montjoie!*" Whoever had heard that cry  
 Would hold remembrance of chivalry.  
 Then ride they—how proudly, O God, they ride!—700  
 With rowels dashed in their coursers' side.  
 Fearless, too, are their paynim foes.  
 Frank and Saracen, thus they close.

96

King Marsil's nephew, Aelroth his name,  
 Vaunting in front of the battle came, 705  
 Words of scorn on our Franks he cast:  
 "Felon Franks, ye are met at last,

690. *strait*: peril.698. *Montjoie*: the war cry of the

Franks; literally, "Mount Joy."

702. *paynim*: pagan.

By your chosen guardian betrayed and sold,  
 By your king left madly the pass to hold.  
 This day shall France of her fame be shorn,  
 710 And from Karl the mighty his right arm torn."  
 Roland heard him in wrath and pain!—  
 He spurred his steed, he slacked the rein,  
 Drove at the heathen with might and main,  
 Shattered his shield and his hauberk broke,  
 715 Right to the breast-bone went the stroke;  
 Pierced him, spine and marrow through,  
 And the felon's soul from his body flew.  
 A moment reeled he upon his horse,  
 Then all heavily dropped the corse;  
 720 Wrenched was his neck as on earth he fell,  
 Yet would Roland scorn with scorn repel.  
 "Thou dastard! never hath Karl been mad,  
 Nor love for treason or traitors had,  
 To guard the passes he left us here,  
 725 Like a noble king and chevalier.  
 Nor shall France this day her fame forego.  
 Strike in, my barons; the foremost blow  
 Death in the fight doth to us belong:  
 We have the right and these dogs the wrong." 730

## 97

A duke was there, named Falsaron,  
 Of the land of Dathan and Abiron;  
 Brother to Marsil, the king, was he;  
 More miscreant felon ye might not see.  
 735 Hugc of forehead, his eyes between,  
 A span of a full half-foot, I ween.  
 Bitter sorrow was his, to mark  
 His nephew before him lie slain and stark.  
 Hastily came he from forth the press,  
 Raising the war-cry of heathenesse. 740  
 Braggart words from his lips were tost:  
 "This day the honour of France is lost."  
 Hotly Sir Olivier's anger stirs;  
 He pricked his steed with golden spurs,  
 Fairly dealt him a baron's blow, 745  
 And hurled him dead from the saddle-bow.  
 Buckler and mail were reft and rent,  
 And the pennon's flaps to his heart's blood went.  
 He saw the miscreant stretched on earth:

"Caitiff, thy threats are of little worth. 750  
 On, Franks, the felons before us fall;  
*Montjoie!*" 'T is the Emperor's battle-call.

98

A king was there of a strange country,  
 King Corsablis of Barbary;  
 Before the Saracen van he cried, 755  
 "Right well may we in this battle bide;  
 Puny the host of the Franks I deem,  
 And those that front us, of vile esteem.  
 Not one by succour of Karl shall fly;  
 The day hath dawned that shall see them die." 760  
 Archbishop Turpin hath heard him well;  
 No mortal hates he with hate so fell:  
 He pricked with spurs of the fine gold wrought,  
 And in deadly passage the heathen sought;  
 Shield and corselet were pierced and riven, 765  
 And the lance's point through his body driven;  
 To and fro, at the mighty thrust,  
 He reeled, and then fell stark in dust.  
 Turpin looked on him, stretched on ground.  
 "Loud thou liest, thou heathen hound! 770  
 King Karl is ever our pride and stay;  
 Nor one of the Franks shall blench this day,  
 But your comrades here on the field shall lie;  
 I bring you tidings: ye all shall die.  
 Strike, Franks! remember your chivalry; 775  
 First blows are ours, high God be praised!"  
 Once more the cry, "*Montjoie!*" he raised.

116

Wild and fierce is the battle still:  
 Roland and Olivier fight their fill;  
 The Archbishop dealeth a thousand blows 780  
 Nor knoweth one of the peers repose;  
 The Franks are fighting commingled all,  
 And the foe in hundreds and thousands fall;  
 Choice have they none but to flee or die,  
 Leaving their lives despoightously. 785  
 Yet the Franks are reft of their chivalry,  
 Who will see nor parent nor kindred fond,  
 Nor Karl who waits them the pass beyond.

785. *despoightously*: pitifully.

786. *Yet . . . chivalry*: That is, the

Franks, heavily outnumbered, are eventually slain.

117

Now a wondrous storm o'er France hath passed,  
 With thunder-stroke and whirlwind's blast; 790  
 Rain unmeasured, and hail, there came,  
 Sharp and sudden the lightning's flame;  
 And an earthquake ran—the sooth I say—  
 From Besançon to Wissant Bay.  
 From Saint Michael's Mount to thy shrine, Cologne,  
 House unrifted was there none.  
 And a darkness spread in the noontide high—  
 No light, save gleams from the cloven sky.  
 On all who saw came a mighty fear.  
 They said, "The end of the world is near." 800  
 Alas, they spake but with idle breath—  
 'T is the great lament for Roland's death.

119

Stern and stubborn is the fight;  
 Staunch are the Franks with the sword to smite;  
 Nor is there one but whose blade is red, 805  
 "Montjoie!" is ever their war-cry dread.  
 Through the land they ride in hot pursuit,  
 And the heathens feel 't is a fierce dispute.

121

With heart and prowess the Franks have stood;  
 Slain was the heathen multitude; 810  
 Of a hundred thousand survive not two:  
 The archbishop crieth, "O staunch and true!  
 Written it is in the Frankish geste,  
 That our Emperor's vassals shall bear them best."  
 To seek their dead through the field they press, 815  
 And their eyes drop tears of tenderness:  
 Their hearts are turned to their kindred dear.  
 Marsil the while with his host is near.

125

As the Franks the heathen power descried,  
 Filling the champaign from side to side, 820  
 Loud unto Roland they made their call,

795. *Saint Michael's Mount*: Mont  
 Saint Michel.

796. *unrifted*: undamaged.

813. *geste*: story.  
 820. *champaign*: field.

## 554 · *Song of Roland*

And to Olivier and their captains all,  
 Spake the archbishop as him became:  
 "O barons, think not one thought of shame;  
 Fly not, for sake of our God I pray. 825  
 That on you be chanted no evil lay.  
 Better by far on the field to die;  
 For in sooth I deem that our end is nigh.  
 But in holy Paradise ye shall meet,  
 And with the innocents be your scat." 830  
 And the Franks exult his words to hear,  
 And the cry "*Montjoie!*" resoundeth clear.

### 129

Sir Roland called unto Olivier,  
 "Sir Comrade, dead lieth Engclier;  
 Braver knight had we none than he." 835  
 "God grant," he answered, "revenge to me."  
 His spurs of gold to his horse he laid,  
 Grasping Hauteclere with his bloody blade.  
 Climorin smote he, with stroke so fell,  
 Slain at the blow was the infidel, 840  
 Whose soul the Enemy bore away.  
 Then turned he, Alphaicn, the duke, to slay;  
 From Escababi the head he shore,  
 And Arabs seven to the earth he bore.  
 Saith Roland, "My comrade is much in wrath;  
 Won great laud by my side he hath; 845  
 Us such prowess to Karl endears.  
 Fight on, fight ever, my cavaliers."

### 145

Count Roland entered within the prease,  
 And smote full deadly without surcease; 850  
 While Durindana aloft he held,  
 Hauberk and helm he pierced and quelled,  
 Intrenching body and hand and head.  
 The Saracens lie by the hundred dead,  
 And the heathen host is discomfited. 855

838. *Hauteclere*: Olivier's sword. *his*:  
 its.

841. *the Enemy*: the devil.

843. *shore*: cut off.

849. *prease*: press.

853. *Intrenching*: cutting through.

149

"I will sound," said Roland, "upon my horn,  
 Karl, as he passeth the gorge, to warn.  
 The Franks, I know, will return apace."  
 Said Olivier, "Nay, it were foul disgrace  
 On your noble kindred to wreak such wrong; 860  
 They would bear the stain their lifetime long.  
 Erewhile I sought it, and sued in vain;  
 But to sound thy horn thou wouldst not deign.  
 Not now shall mine assent be won,  
 Nor shall I say it is knightly done. 865  
 Lo! both your arms are streaming red."  
 "In sooth," said Roland, "good strokes I sped."

150

Said Roland, "Our battle goes hard, I fear;  
 I will sound my horn that Karl may hear."  
 "'T were a deed unknightly," said Olivier; 870  
 "Thou didst disdain when I sought and prayed:  
 Saved had we been with our Karl to aid;  
 Unto him and his host no blame shall be:  
 By this my beard, might I hope to see  
 My gentle sister Alda's face, 875  
 Thou shouldst never hold her in thine embrace."

151

"Ah, why on me doth thine anger fall?"  
 "Roland, 't is thou who hast wrought it all.  
 Valor and madness are scarce allied,—  
 Better discretion than daring pride. 880  
 All of thy folly our Franks lie slain,  
 Nor shall render service to Karl again;  
 As I implored thee, if thou hadst done,  
 The king had come and the field were won;  
 Marsil captive, or slain, I trow. 885  
 Thy daring, Roland, hath wrought our woe.  
 No service more unto Karl we pay,  
 That first of men till the judgment day;  
 Thou shalt die, and France dishonored be,  
 Ended our loyal company— 890  
 A woeful parting this eve shall see."

152

Archbishop Turpin their strife hath heard,  
 His steed with the spurs of gold he spurred,

862. *Erewhile*: a while ago. *sued*: asked. 881. *of*: because of.

And thus rebuked them, riding near:  
 "Sir Roland, and thou, Sir Olivier, 895  
 Contend not, in God's great name, I crave.  
 Not now availeth the horn to save;  
 And yet behooves you to wind its call,—  
 Karl will come to avenge our fall,  
 Nor hence the foemen in joyance wend. 900  
 The Franks will all from their steeds descend;  
 When they find us slain and martyred here,  
 They will raise our bodies on mule and bier,  
 And, while in pity aloud they weep,  
 Lay us in hallowed earth to sleep; 905  
 Nor wolf nor boar on our limbs shall feed."  
 Said Roland, "Yea, 't is a goodly rede."

153

Then to his lips the horn he drew,  
 And full and lustily he blew.  
 The mountain peaks soared high around; 910  
 Thirty leagues was borne the sound.  
 Karl hath heard it, and all his band.  
 "Our men have battle," he said, "on hand."  
 Ganelon rose in front and cried,  
 "If another spake, I would say he lied." 915

154

With deadly travail, in stress and pain,  
 Count Roland sounded the mighty strain.  
 Forth from his mouth the bright blood sprang,  
 And his temples burst for the very pang.  
 On and onward was borne the blast, 920  
 Till Karl hath heard as the gorge he passed,  
 And Naimes and all his men of war.  
 "It is Roland's horn," said the Emperor,  
 "And, save in battle, he had not blown."  
 "Battle," said Ganelon, "is there none. 925  
 Old are you grown—all white and hoar;  
 Such words bespeak you a child once more.  
 Have you, then, forgotten Roland's pride,  
 Which I marvel God should so long abide,  
 How he captured Noples without your hest? 930  
 Forth from the city the heathen pressed,  
 To your vassal Roland they battle gave,—  
 He slew them all with the trenchant glaive,  
 Then turned the waters upon the plain,



That trace of blood might none remain. 935  
 He would sound all day for a single hare:  
 'T is a jest with him and his fellows there;  
 For who would battle against him dare?  
 Ride onward—wherefore this chill delay?  
 Your mighty land is yet far away.” 940

155

On Roland's mouth is the bloody stain,  
 Burst asunder his temple's vein;  
 His horn he soundeth in anguish drear;  
 King Karl and the Franks around him hear.  
 Said Karl, “That horn is long of breath.” 945  
 Said Naimcs, “'T is Roland who travaileth.  
 There is battle yonder by mine avow.  
 He who betrayed him deceives you now.  
 Arm, sire; ring forth your rallying cry,  
 And stand your noble household by; 950  
 For you hear your Roland in jeopardy.”

165

When the heathen saw that the Franks were few,  
 Heart and strength from the sight they drew;  
 They said, “The Emperor hath the worse.”  
 The Algalif sat on a sorrel horse; 955  
 He pricked with spur of the gold *refined*,  
 Smote Olivier in the back behind.  
 On through his harness the lance he pressed,  
 Till the steel came out at the baron's breast.  
 “Thou hast it!” the Algalif, vaunting, cried, 960  
 “Ye were sent by Karl in an evil tide.  
 Of his wrongs against us he shall not boast;  
 In thee alone I avenge our host.”

166

Olivier felt the deadly wound,  
 Yet he grasped Hauteclere, with its steel embrowncd; 965  
 He smote on the Algalif's crest of gold,—  
 Gem and flowers to the earth were rolled;  
 Clave his head to the teeth below,  
 And struck him dead with the single blow.  
 “All evil, caitiff, thy soul pursue. 970  
 Full well our Emperor's loss I knew;  
 But for thee—thou goest not hence to boast  
 To wife or dame on thy natal coast,

## 558 · *Song of Roland*

Of one denier from the Emperor won,  
Or of scathe to me or to others done." 975  
Then Roland's aid he called upon.

167

Olivier knoweth him hurt to death;  
The more to vengeance he hasteneth;  
Knightly as ever his arms he bore,  
Staves of lances and shields he shore; 980  
Sides and shoulders and hands and feet.  
Whose eyes soever the sight would greet,  
How the Saracens all disfigured lie,  
Corpse upon corpse, each other by,  
Would think upon gallant deeds; nor yet 985  
Doth he the war-cry of Karl forget—  
"Montjoie!" he shouted, shrill and clear;  
Then called he Roland, his friend and peer,  
"Sir, my comrade, anear me ride;  
This day of dolor shall us divide." 990

168

Roland looked Olivier in the face,—  
Ghastly paleness was there to trace;  
Forth from his wound did the bright blood-flow,  
And rain in showers to the earth below.  
"O God!" said Roland, "is this the end 995  
Of all thy prowess, my gentle friend?  
Nor know I whither to bear me now:  
On earth shall never be such as thou.  
Ah, gentle France, thou art overthrown,  
Reft of thy bravest, despoiled and lone; 1000  
The Emperor's loss is full indeed!"  
At the word he fainted upon his steed.

169

Sec Roland there on his charger swooned,  
Olivier smitten with his death wound!  
His eyes from bleeding are dimmed and dark, 1005  
Nor mortal, near or far, can mark;  
And when his comrade beside him pressed,  
Fiercely he smote on his golden crest;  
Down to the nasal the helm he shred,  
But passed no further, nor pierced his head. 1010  
Roland marvelled at such a blow,  
And thus bespake him soft and low:  
"Hast thou done it, my comrade, wittingly?"

974. *denier*: a French coin of small value.

980. *shore*: cut.  
1009. *shred*: cut.

Roland who loves thee so dear am I,  
 Thou hast no quarrel with me to seek?" 1019  
 Olivier answered, "I hear thee speak,  
 But I see thee not. God seeth thee.  
 Have I struck thee, brother? Forgive it me."  
 "I am not hurt, O Olivier;  
 And in sight of God, I forgive thee here." 1020  
 Then each to other his head was laid,  
 And in love like this was their parting made.

170

Olivier feelth his throe begin;  
 His eyes are turning his head within,  
 Sight and hearing alike are gone. 1025  
 He alights and crouches the earth upon;  
 His *mea culpa* aloud he cries,  
 And his hands in prayer unto God arise,  
 That He grant him Paradise to share,  
 That He bless King Karl and France the fair, 1030  
 His brother Roland o'er all mankind;  
 Then sank his heart, and his head declined,  
 Stretched at length on the earth he lay,—  
 So passed Sir Olivier away.  
 Roland was left to weep alone: 1035  
 Man so woeful hath ne'er been known.

171

When Roland saw that life had fled,  
 And with face to earth his comrade dead,  
 He thus bewept him, soft and still:  
 "Ah, friend, thy prowess wrought thee ill! 1040  
 So many days and years gone by  
 We lived together, thou and I:  
 And thou hast never done me wrong,  
 Nor I to thee, our lifetime long.  
 Since thou art dead, to live is pain." 1045  
 He swooned on Veillantif again,  
 Yet may not unto earth be cast,  
 His golden stirrups held him fast.

174

In Roland's sorrow his wrath arose,  
 Hotly he struck at the heathen foes, 1050  
 Nor left he one of a score alive;  
 Walter slew six, the archbishop five.

The heathens cry, "What a felon three!  
 Look to it, lords, that they shall not flee.  
 Dastard is he who confronts them not;  
 Craven, who lets them depart this spot!" 1055  
 Their cries and shoutings begin once more,  
 And from every side on the Franks they pour.

## 181

The heathens said, "We were born to shame.  
 This day for our disaster came: 1060  
 Our lords and leaders in battle lost,  
 And Karl at hand with his marshalled host;  
 We hear the trumpets of France ring out,  
 And the cry of '*Montjoie!*' their rallying shout.  
 Roland's pride is of such a height, 1065  
 Not to be vanquished by mortal wight;  
 Hurl we our missiles, and hold aloof."  
 And the word they spake, they put in proof,—  
 They flung, with all their strength and craft,  
 Javelin, barb, and plumèd shaft, 1070  
 Roland's buckler was torn and frayed,  
 His cuirass broken and disarrayed,  
 Yet entrance none to his flesh they made.  
 From thirty wounds *Veillantif* bled,  
 Beneath his rider they cast him, dead; 1075  
 Then from the field have the heathen flown:  
 Roland remaineth, on foot, alone.

## 184

Once more to the field doth Roland wend,  
 Till he findeth *Olivier* his friend;  
 The lifeless form to his heart he strained, 1080  
 Bore him back with what strength remained,  
 On a buckler laid him, beside the rest,  
 The archbishop assoiled them all, and blessed.  
 Their dole and pity anew find vent,  
 And Roland maketh his fond lament: 1085  
 "My *Olivier*, my chosen one,  
 Thou wert the noble Duke *Renier's* son,  
 Lord of the March unto *Rivier* vale.  
 To shiver lance and shatter mail,  
 The brave in council to guide and cheer, 1090

To smite the miscreant foe with fear,—  
Was never on earth such cavalier."

185

Dead around him his peers to see,  
And the man he had loved so tenderly,  
Fast the tears of Count Roland ran, 1095  
His visage discolored became, and wan,  
He swooned for sorrow beyond control.  
"Alas," said Turpin, "how great thy dole!"

186

To look on Roland swooning there,  
Surpassed all sorrow he ever bare; 1100  
He stretched his hand, the horn he took,—  
'Through Roncevalles there flowed a brook,—  
A draught to Roland he thought to bring;  
But his steps were feeble and tottering,  
Spent his strength, from waste of blood,— 1105  
He struggled on for scarce a rood,  
When sank his heart, and dropped his frame,  
And his mortal anguish on him came. :

187

Roland revived from his swoon again; :  
On his feet he rose, but in deadly pain; 1110  
He looked on high, and he looked below,  
Till, a space his other companions fro,  
He beheld the baron, stretched on sword,  
The archbishop, vicar of God our Lord.  
*Mea culpa* was Turpin's cry, 1115  
While he raised his hands to heaven on high,  
Imploring Paradise to gain.  
So died the soldier of Carlemaine,—  
With words or weapon, to preach, or fight,  
A champion ever of Christian right, 1120  
And a deadly foe of the infidel.  
God's benediction within him dwell!

188

When Roland saw him stark on earth  
(His very vitals were bursting forth,  
And his brain was oozing from out his head), 1125  
He took the fair white hands outspread,  
Crossed and clasped them upon his breast,  
And thus his plaint to the dead addressed,—

So did his country's law ordain:—

"Ah, gentleman of noble strain, 1130

I trust thee unto God the True,

Whose service never man shall do

With more devoted heart and mind:

To guard the faith, to win mankind,

From the apostles' days till now, 1135

Such prophet never rose as thou.

Nor pain or torment thy soul await,

But of Paradise the open gate."

189

Roland feeleth his death is near,

His brain is oozing by either ear. 1140

For his peers he prayed—God keep them well;

Invoked the angel Gabriel.

That none reproach him, his horn he clasped;

His other hand Durindana grasped;

Then, far as quarrel from crossbow sent, 1145

Across the march of Spain he went.

Where, on a mound, two trees between,

Four flights of marble steps were seen;

Backward he fell, on the field to lie;

And he swooned anon, for the end was nigh. 1150

195

That death was on him he knew full well;

Down from his head to his heart it fell.

On the grass beneath a pine-tree's shade,

With face to earth, his form he laid,

Beneath him placed he his horn and sword, 1155

And turned his face to the heathen horde.

Thus hath he done the sooth to show,

That Karl and his warriors all may know,

That the gentle count a conqueror died.

*Mea culpa* full oft he cried; 1160

And, for all his sins, unto God above,

In sign of penance, he raised his glove.

196

Roland feeleth his hour at hand;

On a knoll he lies toward the Spanish land.

With one hand beats he upon his breast:

"In thy sight, O God, be my sins confessed. 1165

From my hour of birth, both the great and small,

Down to this day, I repent of all."  
As his glove he raises to God on high,  
Angels of heaven descend him nigh. 1170

197

Beneath a pine was his resting-place,  
To the land of Spain hath he turned his face,  
On his memory rose full many a thought—  
Of the lands he won and the fields he fought;  
Of his gentle France, of his kin and line; 1175  
Of his nursing father, King Karl benign;—  
He may not the tear and sob control,  
Nor yet forgets he his parting soul.  
To God's compassion he makes his cry:  
"O Father true, who canst not lie, 1180  
Who didst Lazarus raise unto life again,  
And Daniel shield in the lions' den;  
Shield my soul from its peril, due  
For the sins I sinned my lifetime through."  
He did his right-hand glove uplift— 1185  
Saint Gabriel took from his hand the gift;  
Then drooped his head upon his breast,  
And with clasped hands he went to rest.  
God from on high sent down to him  
One of his angel Cherubim— 1190  
Saint Michael of Peril of the sea,  
Saint Gabriel in company—  
From heaven they came for that soul of price,  
And they bore it with them to Paradise.

1181. *Lazarus*: raised from the dead by Christ. (John 11:1-46.)

## Aucassin and Nicolette (Aucassin et Nicolette)\*

I

He who wants to hear good rhyme  
Of the sport in ancient time  
Of two children, young and sweet,  
Aucassin and Nicolette,  
Of the pains that he endured,  
Of the noble deeds he did  
For his love with clearest face.  
Lovely the song, sweet the tale,  
Courteous and well-disposed.

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No man can be so oppressed,  
 So cast down and comfortless,  
 Burdened down with heaviness,  
 Who will not be, hearing this,  
 Cured, restored to joyfulness,  
 It is so sweet.

## II

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

That Count Bougars de Valence was making war on Count Garin de Beaucaire, so great and so marvelous and so mortal, that not a single day dawned that he was not at the gates and at the walls and at the barriers of the town with a hundred knights and ten thousand soldiers on foot and on horse; and he burned his land and wasted his country and killed his men.

Count Garin de Beaucaire was old and frail and had outlived his time. He had no heir, neither son nor daughter, except a single boy, who was such as I shall tell you.

Aucassin was the name of the lad. Handsome he was and shapely and large and well formed in legs and feet and in body and in arms. His hair was blond and tightly curled, and his eyes were gray and laughing, and his face clear and slender, and his nose high and well placed. He was so endowed with good points that there was in him nothing bad, or that was not good. But he was so overtaken by love, which conquers all, that he didn't want to be a knight, or to take arms, or go into the tourney, or do anything at all which he ought to have done.

His father and his mother used to say to him, "Son, take up your arms, get on your horse, defend your land, and aid your men. If they see you among them, they will defend better their bodies and their goods, and your land and mine."

"Father," said Aucassin, "what are you talking about now? Never may God give me anything I ask of him, if as a knight I mount my horse, or go into the fray or battle, there where I may strike a knight or others strike me, if you do not give me Nicolette, my sweet love, whom I love so much."

"Son," said the father, "that could not be. You let Nicolette alone since she is a slave-girl who was brought from a foreign land. The viscount of this town bought her from the Saracens and brought her to this town. And he has reared her and baptized her and has made her his god-daughter. So will he give her one of these days to some young man who will earn bread for her with honor. You have nothing to do with all this. If you wish to have a wife, I will give you the daughter of a king or of a count. There is no man in France so rich that if you wish for his daughter you shall not have her."



"Look here, Father," said Aucassin, "where is there such high honor on the earth that if Nicolette, my very sweet love, had it, it wouldn't be well placed in her? If she were Empress of Constantinople or of Germany, or Queen of France or of England, it would be little enough for her, so noble she is, and courtly, and of good manner, and the acme of all good qualities."

III

*Now it is sung*

Aucassin lived in Beaucaire;  
Well-built was his castle there.  
Nicolette, of form so fair,  
From her no man could tear him;  
His father tried to scare him,  
And his mother threatened him,  
"Scamp, what do you want to do?  
Nicolette is trim and gay  
But from Carthage cast away;  
From the pagans she was bought.  
Since you want to take a wife,  
Take a wife of high degree."  
"Mother, those wives don't please me.  
Nicolette is debonair,  
Form so sweet and face so clear;  
My heart jumps when she is near.  
Why can't I enjoy her love?  
It is too sweet."

IV

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

When Count Garin de Beaucaire saw that he would not be able to turn his son away from the love of Nicolette, he went to the viscount of the town, who was in his service; so did he speak to him.

"Sir Count, get rid of Nicolette, your god-daughter. Cursed be the land from which she was brought to this country! For because of her, I lose Aucassin, who does not want to become a knight, or do any of the things he ought to do. And know well that if I could have her, I would burn her in a fire, and you might well have great fear for yourself."

"Sire," said the Viscount, "much does it trouble me that he goes and comes and that he speaks to her. I bought her with my money; so have I reared her and baptized her and made her my god-daughter. And I would have given her to some young man who would have earned bread for her with honor. With this your son, Aucassin, would have had nothing to do. But since it is your will

and your pleasure, I will send her to such a land and to such a country that never again will he set eyes upon her."

"Take care that you do it," said Count Garin, "for great evil may come to you from it."

Each went his own way. Now the Viscount was a very, very rich man, and he had a rich palace looking on a garden. In a room in it he had Nicolette placed, high in the tower, and an old woman with her for company and to take care of her. And he had bread and meat and wine brought there and whatever they might need. Then he had the door sealed up so that none might be able, in any way, to go in or come out, except that, opening on the garden, there was one window, quite small, through which there came to them a little fresh air.

## v

*Now it is sung*

Nicolette in prison put;  
 She's in a vaulted chamber  
 Fashioned with the greatest skill  
 And marvelously painted.  
 On the marble window frame  
 There the wretched maiden leans.  
 Now her hair was blond as grain,  
 And her eyebrows were well shaped,  
 Clear and slender was her face,  
 Never was there fairer seen.  
 Toward the forest she looked out  
 And saw the roses swelling,  
 Heard the birds which twittered there;  
 Then the orphan maid cried out,  
 "Wretched captive, woe is me!  
 Why am I in prison put?  
 Aucassin, my youthful lord,  
 I am still your own sweetheart  
 And by you I'm not abhorred.  
 For you I'm a prisoner  
 Within this vaulted chamber.  
 Now my life is very hard;  
 But, by God, sweet Mary's son,  
 I will not stay longer here  
 If I can get out."

## vi

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

Nicolette was in prison, just as you have heard and understood, in the chamber. The cry and the rumor went through all the land

and through all the country that Nicolette was lost. Some said that she had fled out of the country, and others said that Count Garin de Beaucaire had had her murdered. Whoever else had joy of it, Aucassin was not glad. He went to the viscount of the town, so did he address him:

"Sir Viscount, what have you done with Nicolette, my very sweet love, for there is nothing in all the world that I love more? Have you stolen her away from me? Know well that if I die of it, payment will be demanded of you; and that will be very right, for you will have slain me with your two hands, for you have taken from me the thing which I love most in this world."

"Fair lord," said the Viscount, "now stay out of this. Nicolette is a captive whom I brought from a strange land, so did I buy her with my wealth from the Saracens. And I have reared her and baptized her and made her my god-daughter; so have I nourished her. And I should have given her one of these days to a young man who should earn bread for her with honor. With this you have nothing to do. Instead, take the daughter of a king or a count. Moreover, what would you think to have gained if you had made her your mistress and put her in your bed? Little indeed would you have won, for all the days of the world your soul would be in Hell because of it, for into Paradise you could never enter."

"What would I be doing in Paradise? I don't want to enter there, but only to have Nicolette, my very sweet love, whom I love so much. For to Paradise go only such people as I shall tell you of: the old priests, the old cripples and maimed ones who, all night and all day, drag themselves before the altars and in the old crypts, and those who wear old worn-out clothes and are dressed in tattered rags, who are naked and without shoes and stockings, and dying of hunger and thirst and of cold and of misery. These go to Paradise. I have nothing to do with them. But to Hell I wish indeed to go; for to Hell go the handsome clerics, and the fine knights who have died in the tourneys and in great wars, and the good soldiers and the brave men; with them I do wish to go. There, also, go the fair and courteous ladies who have two or three lovers besides their husbands. And there go the gold and silver and miniver and gray furs. There, also, go the harpers and the jongleurs, and the kings of the world. With them do I wish to go—provided that I have Nicolette, my very sweet love, with me."

"Surely," said the Viscount, "your speaking gets you nowhere, for you shall never see her. And if you were to speak to her and your father knew it, he would burn both me and her in a fire, and you might well fear for yourself."

"That's what worries me," said Aucassin, and filled with grief he left the viscount.

## VII

*Now it is sung*

Aucassin has turned away  
Very sad and all downcast;  
For his love with clearest face  
No one now can comfort him,  
Neither give him good advice.  
Toward the palace has he gone;  
He has mounted up the steps.  
In a chamber has he come,  
So did he begin to weep  
And to sigh in deepest grief,  
Lamenting his lost sweetheart.  
"Nicolette, how sweet you were,  
Sweet to come and sweet to go,  
Sweet to play and sweet to say,  
Sweet to tease and sweet to please,  
Sweet to kiss and sweet to squeeze.  
I for you am all cast down  
And am so badly treated  
That I think I'll leave this life,  
Sister, sweet love."

## VIII

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

While Aucassin was in his chamber mourning for Nicolette his love, Count Bougars de Valence, who had his war to maintain, was in no way forgetting it. He had sent forward his horsemen and foot soldiers, and he then directed himself toward the castle to assail it. And a cry arose and a disturbance, and the knights and the soldiers armed themselves and ran to the gates and to the walls to defend the castle, and the bourgeois went up the passage-ways in the walls and threw down rocks and sharpened stakes. While the assault was great and in full swing, the Count Garin de Beaucaire came to the chamber where Aucassin was grieving and mourning Nicolette, his very sweet love, whom he loved so much.

"Ha! Son," said he, "how very weak and wretched you are, that you watch while they assault the best and strongest of all castles. And know that if you lose it, you are disinherited. Come on, Son, take up your arms, and mount your horse and defend your land, and aid your men, and go into the battle. You need never strike a man there, nor let another strike you; yet if they see you among them, they will defend better their goods and their bodies and your land and mine. You are so big and so strong that you can easily do it, and you ought to do it."

"Father," said Aucassin, "what are you talking about now? May

God give me nothing of what I ask of him if I play the knight or mount on a horse or go into the battle, where I may strike some knights, or be struck by others, unless you give me Nicolette, my sweet love, whom I love so much."

"Son," said the father, "that can't be done; rather would I suffer that I should be entirely dispossessed and that I should lose all that I have than that you should ever have her for your wife or for your bride."

He turned away, and when Aucassin saw him about to go, he called him back.

"Father," said Aucassin, "come back, I will make a good bargain with you."

"Such as what, my fine son?"

"I will take up arms and go into the battle on your promise that, if God brings me back safe and sound, you will let me see Nicolette, my sweet love, long enough to have two or three words with her, and that I may kiss her one single time."

"I grant it," said the father.

He gave him his word, and Aucassin was glad.

IX

*Now it is sung*

Aucassin a kiss will have  
If he should return alive;  
For a hundred thousand marks  
He would not be half so glad.  
He demanded armor bright;  
Servants clothed him as a knight.  
Double hauberk he put on,  
Laced his helmet on his head,  
Girt his sword with golden hilt,  
And on his charger mounted.  
Then he took his shield and spear,  
Cast a glance down at his feet.  
In his stirrups well they sat;  
High he holds his head aloft.  
He remembers his sweet love.  
Forward then he spurs his horse;  
Willingly he takes his course.  
Right up to the gate he goes  
To the battle.

X

*Now they tell and relate*

Aucassin was armed and on his horse, as you have heard and understood. God, how becoming the shield was at his neck and the helmet on his head and the belt of his sword on his left hip. The

lad was big and strong and handsome and noble and well turned out, and the horse which he rode, quick and rapid; and the lad had ridden him straight through the middle of the gate.

Now don't you believe that he was thinking of taking oxen or cows or goats, or that he would strike some knight or another strike him. Nothing like that! Not once did it occur to him. But he thought so much of Nicolette, his sweet love, that he forgot the reins and all that he had to do. And the horse that had felt the spurs carried him into the thick of the battle and hurled him right into the midst of his enemies. They grabbed him from all sides; so did they take him. And they relieved him of his shield and lance; so did they quickly lead him away a prisoner. And they went along, already considering what death they would make him die.

And when Aucassin heard them:

"Ah, God," said he, "sweet creature! Are these my mortal enemies who are holding me here, and who now will cut off my head? And after my head is cut off, never will I speak to Nicolette, my sweet love, whom I love so much. Yet I have here a good sword, and I'm riding a good fresh war-horse. If now I don't defend myself for her sake, never may God help her if she loves me any more."

The lad was big and strong, and the horse on which he sat was lively. And he snatched his sword and began to strike right and left and cut through helmets and nose-pieces and fists and arms and made a slaughter round about him, like the wild boar when the dogs attack him in the forest. And so did he strike down ten knights and wound seven, and rode quickly out of the thick of things. So did he come galloping back, sword in hand.

The Count Bougars de Valence heard them say that they were going to hang Aucassin, his enemy, and he came to that place, and Aucassin did not mistake him. He took his sword in hand and whacked down on the helmet so that it went down over his head. He was so stunned that he fell onto the ground. And Aucassin put out his hand, took him and led him along by the nose-guard of his helmet, and handed him over to his father.

"Father," said Aucassin, "look, here is your enemy who for so long has made war on you and done harm; this war has lasted for twenty years and never could it be ended by anyone."

"Fair son," said the father, "you ought to do these youthful deeds and not chase after foolishness."

"Father," said Aucassin, "don't you go making sermons to me, but keep your promises to me."

"Bah! What promises, fair son?"

"What, Father, have you forgotten them? By my head, whoever else forgets them, I don't want to forget them, so close I hold them

to my heart. Didn't you make an agreement with me that if I took up arms and went into battle and if God brought me back safe and sound, you would let me see Nicolette, my sweet love, long enough to have two or three words with her? And didn't you make an agreement that I might kiss her one time? I want you to keep this promise to me."

"I?" said the father. "May God never aid me if I keep faith with you in this. And if she were here now, I would burn her in a fire, and you, yourself, might well be afraid."

"Is this your last word?" asked Aucassin.

"So help me God," said the father, "yes!"

"Well," said Aucassin, "very, very much do I grieve when a man of your age is a liar."

"Count de Valence," said Aucassin, "I took you a prisoner."

"You surely did, sir," said the count.

"Give me your hand on it," said Aucassin.

"Willingly, sir." And he put his hand in his.

"Now swear to me," said Aucassin, "that, any day as long as you live, should you be able to do dishonor or destruction to my father, either in his person or his property, you won't fail to do it.

"Sir, for God's sake," said he, "don't mock me, but set a ransom on me. You will not be able to ask of me gold, or silver, horses or palfreys, miniver or gray fur, or hounds or birds, that I will not give you."

"What?" said Aucassin. "Don't you know that I have taken you prisoner?"

"Oh yes, sir," said the Count Bougars.

"If you do not swear it to me," said Aucassin, "may God never help me if I do not send your head flying now."

"In the name of God," he said, "I'll swear to whatever you please."

So he swore, and Aucassin made him mount on a horse, and he mounted another and led him back until he was in safety.

XI

*Now it is sung*

Now when sees the Count Garin  
That his offspring Aucassin  
Cannot tear himself away  
From the clear-faced Nicolette,  
In a cell he had him set,  
In a prison underground,  
Which was made of marble dark.  
Now when Aucassin came there  
He was sadder than before.

If you wish, you now may hear  
 What lamenting he began:  
 "Nicolette, sweet fleur-le-lis,  
 Sweet love with the clearest face,  
 Sweeter than a bunch of grapes,  
 Sweeter than the wine bowl's sop.  
 One time I saw a pilgrim  
 Who was born in Limousin,  
 With the palsy nearly dead;  
 Thus he lay upon his bed.  
 A sick man he was indeed,  
 Stricken with a dread disease.  
 When you passed before his bed,  
 Then you lifted up your skirt,  
 And your coat with ermine lined,  
 Your chemise of linen white,  
 Until he could see your leg.  
 Straightway was the pilgrim cured  
 More than he had ever been.  
 Then he jumped up from his bed;  
 To his country he returned,  
 Safe and sound, completely cured.  
 O sweet love, sweet fleur-de-lis,  
 Sweet to kiss, sweet to embrace,  
 Sweet to come and sweet to go,  
 Sweet to say and sweet to play,  
 Sweet to please and sweet to squeeze,  
 No man could ever hate you.  
 Yet for your sake I am here  
 In this prison underground  
 Where I make a dismal end.  
 Now I ought to kill myself  
 For you, my love."

XII

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

Aucassin was put in prison, as you have heard and understood, and Nicolette was elsewhere in her chamber. This was in the summertime, in the month of May, when the days are hot and long and clear and the nights still and serene.

Nicolette lay one night in her bed, and she saw the moon shine clear through a window, and she heard the nightingale singing in the garden; so did she recall Aucassin, her love whom she loved so much. She began to reflect about Count Garin de Beaucaire, who hated her to death. So did she think that she would remain



there no longer; for, if she were discovered and Count Garin heard about it, he would make her die an evil death. She perceived that the old woman who was with her was sleeping. She got up and put on a good chemise of cloth of silk that she had, and she took her bed-clothes and towels, and tied them one to another and made a cord as long as she could. This she tied to the pillar of the window; so did she slide down into the garden. She took the front of her dress with one hand and the back with the other and raised it close about her, because of the dew which she saw heavy upon the grass, and so she made off down the garden.

She had blond hair tightly curled, and eyes gray and laughing, and a slender face, and a nose high and well placed, and lips redder than the cherry or the rose in the summertime, and teeth small and white. And she had firm little breasts which raised up her gown as if they were two walnuts, and she was so slender in the waist that you could have circled it with your two hands. And the blossoms of daisies which she broke with the toes of her feet and which were lying upon her instep were completely black beside her feet and legs, so very, very white was the maiden.

She came to the postern and unlocked it. So did she pass out into the streets of Beaucaire, under cover of the shadows, for the moon was shining very clear. And she wandered about until she came to the tower where her lover was. The tower was cracked from place to place. And Nicolette squatted down against one of the buttresses and wrapped her cloak about her. She stuck her head in through a crevice of the tower, which was old and ancient. So did she hear Aucassin, who, inside, was weeping and wailing loudly and regretting his sweet love, whom he loved so much. And when she had listened enough to him, she began to speak.

XIII

*Now it is sung*

Nicolette with clearest face  
Was leaning on a buttress.  
Aucassin she heard to weep  
And lament his sweetheart lost.  
Now she speaks and says her thought.  
"Aucassin, my noble lord,  
Gentle, high-born, honored youth,  
What's the use of all these sighs,  
This weeping and lamenting?  
For you can never have me;  
Your father and your family  
All hate me and detest me.  
For you I'd sail the high seas

And go to other countries."  
 From her hair she cut a lock  
 And threw it in his dungeon.  
 Noble Aucassin took it  
 And did it a great homage.  
 He kissed it and embraced it  
 And stuck it in his bosom,  
 Then began again to weep  
 All for his love.

## XIV

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

When Aucassin heard Nicolette say that she wished to go away to another country, in him there was nothing but anger.

"Fair sweet love," said he, "you shall not go away, for then you would be the death of me. And the first one who saw you, and who would be able to do it, would take you immediately and put you into his bed, and so would he make you his mistress. And once you had lain in a man's bed—if it wasn't mine—don't think that I would wait until I had found a knife with which I could pierce my heart and kill myself. No, indeed, I wouldn't wait that long, but I would rush about until I saw a wall or a dark stone, and I would dash my head against it so hard that I would make my eyes pop out and brain myself completely. For I would much prefer to die such a death than to know that you were in a man's bed—if it wasn't mine."

"Ah!" said she. "I don't think that you love me as much as you say. But I love you more than you love me."

"Look here," said Aucassin, "fair sweet love, it couldn't be that you should love me as much as I love you. Woman can't love man as much as man loves woman, for the love of a woman is in her eye, and in the nipple of her breast, and in the toe of her foot, but the love of a man is planted in the heart where it can't escape."

While Aucassin and Nicolette were talking there, the guardsmen of the town were coming down the street. They had their swords drawn beneath their cloaks, for Count Garin had commanded them that if they were able to take her, they should kill her. And the watchman who was on the tower saw them coming and heard them going along talking about Nicolette and threatening to kill her.

"God," said he, "what a great pity for so fair a girl, if they should kill her. And it would be a very great charity if I could tell her, in some way they wouldn't perceive, that she should be on her guard. For if they kill her, then Aucassin, my young lord, will die, and that will be a great loss."

xv

*Now it is sung*

The watchman was a gallant,  
Knowing, proud and courteous man.  
So did he begin a song  
Which was sweet and ran along.  
"Maiden of the noble heart,  
Body fair and full of grace,  
Thou hast blond and shining hair,  
Grayish eyes and smiling face.  
Well do I see by thy air,  
Thou hast spoken to thy love,  
Who now for thee dying is.  
Listen while I tell thee this:  
From seducers guard thyself;  
They are looking for thee here,  
Bearing swords beneath their cloaks.  
Terribly they'll threaten thee;  
Soon much evil will they do  
If thou guard not well."

xvi

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

"Ah," said Nicolette, "may the souls of your father and mother be in blessed repose, since so fairly and courteously you have told me about them. If it please God, I will guard myself well from them, and God help me do it."

She wrapped her cloak about her in the shadow of the buttress until they had passed beyond. Then she took leave of Aucassin and went on until she came to the wall of the castle. The wall was in pieces and had been boarded up, and she climbed up on this and made her way along until she was between the wall and the moat. And she looked down and saw that the moat was very deep and very steep, and she was very, very much afraid.

"Oh God," said she, "sweet creature! If I let myself fall, I'll break my neck, and if I remain here, they will take me tomorrow, and they will burn me in a fire. I would much prefer that I die here than that all the folk should stare at me tomorrow under marvelous circumstances."

She made the sign of the cross above her head and let herself slide down into the moat. And when she came to the bottom, her beautiful feet and her beautiful hands, which had never learned that things might wound them, were bruised and torn, and the blood flowed from them in at least a dozen places; but nevertheless she felt neither hurt nor pain because of the great fear which she

had. And though getting in had been much trouble, getting out was even more. She thought to herself that it would never do any good to remain there. She found a sharpened stake which those within had thrown down in defense of the castle, and placing one foot before the other, she mounted up with great difficulty until she came to the top.

Now there was a forest, about two crossbow shots away, which stretched for at least thirty leagues in length and in breadth, and there were savage beasts in it—also serpents. She was afraid that if she entered there, these might kill her; and, on the other hand, she reflected, if they found her there, they would lead her back to the town to burn her.

## XVII

*Now it is sung*

Nicolette with clearest face  
Up the moat has made her way.  
Then began she to lament  
And in Jesus' name to pray:  
"Father, King of Majesty,  
I do not know where to go.  
If I go into the woods,  
There the wolves will eat me sure,  
The wild boars and the lions,  
Of which there are a-plenty.  
If I wait the daylight clear  
So that they could find me here,  
They will light their fires of wood  
And my body will be burned.  
But, by God of Majesty,  
I would very much prefer  
That even wolves should eat me,  
Or wild boars or the lions,  
Than go into the city.  
I will not go."

## XVIII

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

Nicolette lamented as you have heard. She commended herself to God and wandered on until she came into the forest. She didn't dare to enter very deep into it because of the savage beasts and because of the serpents; so she crawled into a thick bush. Sleep seized her, and she slept until the next morning at seven-thirty when the shepherds came out of the town and drove their beasts between the wood and the river. There they drew aside to a very beautiful spring which was at the edge of the forest, and spread out

a cape and set their bread upon it. And while they were eating, Nicolette was awakened by the cries of the birds and of the shepherds; so did she hurry toward them.

"Fair children," said she, "may the Mother of God aid you."

"God bless you!" said the one of them who was more talkative than the others.

"Fair children," said she, "do you know Aucassin, the son of Count Garin de Beaucaire?"

"Yes, we know him well."

"So may God aid you, fair children," she said. "Tell him that there is a beast in this forest, and that he is to come to hunt for it; and if he could catch it, he would not give one leg of it for one hundred marks of gold, not for five hundred, nor for any amount."

And they looked at her, and so did they see her so beautiful that they were all astonished.

"I should tell him *that*?" said he who was more talkative than the others. "Damned be the one who would ever talk about it, or who would ever tell him! It's a phantom that you're talking about, for there is no beast in the forest so valuable, neither stag nor lion nor wild boar, that one of his legs would be worth more than a shilling or two at the most, and you speak of such a great value! Damned be the one who believes you, or *whoever* shall tell it to him! You are some fairy, and we have no *desire* for your company, so you keep on your way."

"Ah, fair children," she said, "you will *do* this. The beast has such medicine that Aucassin will be cured of *his* illness. And I have five sous here in my purse; take them—if you will tell him. And he ought to hunt it within three days; and if, within three days, he doesn't find it, he never will be cured of his illness."

"By faith," said he, "we will take the money, and if he comes here, we will tell him; but we'll never go to look for him."

"It's up to God," said she.

Then she took leave of the shepherds, and so did she go on her way.

XIX

*Now it is sung*

Nicolette with clearest face  
Has parted from the shepherds.  
So she's taken up her way  
Right into the leafy wood,  
Following an abandoned path  
Until she met a highway.  
Where seven roads divided  
Which went through the country-side.

Then the thought came to her head  
 How she could prove her lover,  
 If he loved her as he said.  
 So she took the iris-flower  
 And green grass from a thicket  
 And some branches thick with leaves.  
 So she made a leafy hut;  
 Prettier was there never seen.  
 By the truthful God she swore  
 That if Aucassin came there  
 And did not for love of her  
 Rest in it a little while  
 Never would he be her love  
 Nor she be his.

## xx

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

Nicolette had made a hut, as you have heard and understood, very pretty and attractive, for she had decorated it well inside and outside with flowers and with leaves. Then she lay down close by the hut in a thick bush to know what Aucassin would do.

And the cry and rumor went through all the land and through all the country that Nicolette was lost. Some said that she had run away, and others said that Count Garin had had her murdered. Whoever may have had joy from it, Aucassin wasn't at all happy about it. And Count Garin, his father, had him taken out of prison. So did he send for the knights and the ladies, and he had made a great rich feast, with which he thought to comfort Aucassin, his son.

Although the feast was most complete, Aucassin stood leaning on a post all sad and all limp. Whoever had joy, Aucassin was in no mood for it; for he saw nothing at all there of the thing he loved. A knight looked at him and came up to him; so did he speak to him.

"Aucassin," said he, "I have been sick with the same illness that you have. I will give you some good advice, if you wish to believe me."

"Sir," said Aucassin, "many thanks. I would appreciate some good advice."

"Get on a horse," said he, "and ride along the forest to cheer yourself up. And you will see the flowers and the plants, and you will hear the little birds sing. By some chance you may hear some word for which you will be better."

"Sir," said Aucassin, "Thanks very much. That's what I'll do."

He slipped out of the hall and went down the stairs and came to the stable where his horse was. He had the saddle and bridle put

on. He put his foot in the stirrup and mounted and went out of the castle. And he wandered until he came to the forest and rode along until he reached the spring and found the shepherds just at mid-afternoon. They had spread out a cape on the grass, and they were eating their bread and making very merry.

XXI

*Now it is sung*

Now the shepherds gather round,  
 Little Martin and Esmy,  
 Little Frulin and Johnny,  
 Little Robin and Aubrey.  
 "Little shepherd boys," said one,  
 "God help little Aucassin;  
 He is a fine young fellow.  
 And the girl with form so small  
 And curly hair so yellow.  
 Bright her face, her eye so gray,  
 She gave us little pennies  
 With which we'll buy little cakes,  
 Little knives and little sheaths,  
 Little flutes and little horns,  
 Little crooks and little pipes.  
 May God help her."

XXII

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

When Aucassin heard the shepherds, he recalled Nicolette, his very sweet love, whom he loved so much, and thought that she had been there. He pricked his horse with the spurs, and so did he come up to the shepherds.

"Fair children, may God aid you!"

"God bless you!" said the one who was more talkative than the others.

"Fair children," said he, "repeat the song that you were singing just now."

"We will not say it," said the one who was more talkative than the others. "Damned now be the one who will sing it for you, fair sir."

"Fair children," said Aucassin, "don't you know me?"

"Yes, we know very well that you are Aucassin, our young lord, but we don't belong to you, but rather to the count."

"Fair children, you will do this, I pray you."

"Oh, for God's sake!" said he. "Why should I sing for you if it doesn't suit me? When there is no man so rich in this country, except Count Garin in person, who, if he found my oxen, or my

cows, or my sheep in his fields, or even in his grain, would risk having his eyes put out, for daring to chase them from it? And why should I sing for you if it doesn't suit me?"

"God aid you, fair children, if you will do it, and take ten sous which I have here in my purse."

"Sir, we will take the money, but I will not sing it for you, for I have sworn it, but I will tell it to you if you wish."

"It's up to God," said Aucassin, "I would rather have it told than nothing."

"Sir, we were here a little while ago, between six and nine this morning, eating our bread by this spring, as we are now, and a maiden came here, the most beautiful in the world, so that we believed her to be a fairy, and this whole wood was made bright by her. And she gave us so much of what she had that we made a promise to her, that if you came here, we would tell you that you should go and hunt in this forest, where there is a beast which, if you should be able to catch it, you would never give up one of its legs for five hundred marks of silver, or for any price. For the beast has such a medicine that, if you could catch it, you would be cured of your illness. And you must take it within three days, and if you haven't caught it, you will never see it again. Now hunt it, if you will; or if you will, leave it, for I have fully acquitted myself towards her."

"Fair children," said Aucassin, "you have told me enough about it, and God let me find it!"

### XXIII

#### *Now it is sung*

Aucassin has heard the words  
Of his love with form so fair.  
Much they struck him to the core.  
Soon he leaves the shepherd boys  
And in the deep woods enters.  
His war-horse ambled quickly,  
At a gallop carried him.  
Now he speaks and says three words:  
"Nicolette, of form so fair,  
In this woods for you I've come.  
I'm not hunting stag or boar;  
Your tracks I am following.  
Your gray eyes and your sweet form,  
Your soft speech and gentle laugh  
Unto death my heart do wound.  
If it please the Father, God,  
Then shall I see you again.  
Sister, sweet love."



## XXIV

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

Aucassin went through the forest from path to path, and his war horse carried him along at a great speed. Don't think that the briars and thorns spared him. Nothing of the sort! Rather they ripped up his clothes so that one could scarcely have made a knot out of the biggest pieces. And blood ran from his arms and his sides and his legs in forty places—or thirty, so that after the lad one might follow the traces of blood which fell on the grass. But he thought so much about Nicolette, his sweet love, that he felt neither pain nor unhappiness. And he went all day through the forest in such a way that he never did get news of her. And when he saw evening approaching, he began to weep because he couldn't find her.

He was riding along an old path all covered with leaves, when he looked before him, in the middle of the path; so did he see a yokel such as I shall tell you. Great he was, and marvelous and ugly and hideous; and he had a great bushy head blacker than charcoal, and he had more than a hand's breath between his two eyes, and he had great cheeks and a huge flat nose, and wide nostrils and thick lips redder than roast beef, and big teeth, yellow and ugly. And he wore leggings and shoes of cow-hide, cross-laced with willow bark to above the knee. He was wearing a cape unfinished inside and out, and he was leaning on a big club.

Aucassin hurried toward him and was very frightened when he got a good look at him.

"Fair brother, God help you!"

"God help you," said he.

"God help you. What are you doing here?"

"What's it to you?" said he.

"Nothing," said Aucassin, "I don't ask you except with good reason."

"But why are you crying," said he, "and making such a to-do? Surely, if I were as rich a man as you are, all the world wouldn't make me cry."

"What! do you know me?" said Aucassin.

"Sure, I know well that you are Aucassin, the son of the count, and if you will tell me why you are crying, I will tell you what I am doing here."

"Surely," said Aucassin, "I will tell you very gladly. I came this morning to hunt in the forest, and I had a white greyhound, the most beautiful in the world, and I have lost it. That's why I'm crying."

"To hear," said he, "by the heart that the Lord had in his belly, that you were crying over a stinking dog? May he be badly damned

who shall ever take any account of you, when there is no man in this land so rich, that if your father asked him for ten or fifteen or twenty, he would not have given them only too willingly and have been only too glad. But I ought to cry and wail."

"And for what reason, brother?"

"Sir, I'll tell you. I was in the hire of a rich farmer, and I drove his plough, a four-ox one. Now three days ago there came to me a great accident by which I lost the best one of my oxen, Roget, the best of my team. So now I am looking for him, and I haven't eaten or drunk for the last three days. And I don't dare go to the town, for they would put me in prison since I don't have the money to pay for it. Of all the wealth in the world, I have nothing more valuable than what you see on my body. I have a poor old mother, and she had nothing more valuable than an old mattress, and they have taken it right out from under her back, so that she lies on the bare straw now. I am much more worried about her than about myself, for money comes and goes. If I have lost now, I will gain it another time; so shall I pay for my ox when I can, nor will I ever cry about it. And you were crying over a filthy dog—may anyone who ever takes any account of you be damned forever!"

"You certainly are a good comfort, fair brother, and may you be blessed! And what was your ox worth?"

"Sir, twenty sous they are asking me for it, and I can't get a single sou knocked off."

"Now take," said Aucassin, "the twenty which I have in my purse, and pay for your ox."

"Sir," said he, "thanks very much, and may God let you find what you are seeking."

He parted from him, and Aucassin rode on. The night was fair and still, and he wandered along until he came to the place where the seven roads forked. So did he look before him, and he saw the hut that Nicolette had built, which was hung outside and inside and on top and in front with flowers and was so beautiful that it could not be more so. When Aucassin saw it, he stopped all of a sudden, and the rays of the moon were shining in it.

"Oh, God," said Aucassin, "Nicolette, my sweet love, was here, and she made this with her own beautiful hands. Because of her sweetness and for love of her, I will get down now and stretch out there for the rest of the night."

Now the horse was big and tall, and Aucassin took his foot out of the stirrup to get down. He was thinking so much about Nicolette, his very sweet love, that he fell so hard on a stone that his shoulder flew out of place. He felt himself badly hurt, but he forced himself along as best he could, and tied the horse with his other hand to a

thornbush; then he turned on his side so that he crawled into the hut. He looked up through a hole in the hut, and he saw the stars in the sky. He saw one brighter than the others, and he began to say.

XXV

*Now it is sung*

"I can see you, little star,  
Which the moon draws after her.  
Nicolette is with you there,  
My sweet love with golden hair.  
I think God wants to have her  
So that all the evening light  
Can by her be made more bright.  
At the risk of falling down  
Would that I were up with you;  
I would kiss you willingly.  
Though I were a monarch's son,  
You would worthy be of me.  
Sister, sweet love."

XXVI

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

When Nicolette heard Aucassin, she came to him, for she was not far off. She came into the hut; so did she throw her arms around his neck, kissed him, and embraced him.

"Fair sweet love, it's good to find you!"

"And you, fair sweet love, it's good to find you!"

They kissed each other and embraced; so was their joy beautiful.

"Ah, sweet love," said Aucassin, "just now I hurt my shoulder, and now I feel neither pain nor grief since I have you."

She felt him carefully and found that he had his shoulder out of place. She handled it and pulled it about so with her white hands that, as God who loves lovers willed it, it came back into place; and then she took some flowers and fresh grass and green leaves, and she bound it up with the tail of her chemise, and he was completely cured.

"Aucassin," said she, "fair sweet love, take counsel what you will do. If your father has this forest searched tomorrow, whatever may become of you, they will kill me."

"Surely, fair sweet love, I should be very sad over it; but if I am able, they shall never get hold of you."

He mounted on his horse, and took his love up in front of him kissing and embracing her; so did they set off to the open fields.

## XXVII

*Now it is sung*

Aucassin, the fair, the blond,  
 The gentle and the loving,  
 Out of that deep woods has gone  
 With his love between his arms,  
 His saddle-bow before him.  
 He kissed her eyes and forehead,  
 Kissed her mouth and then her chin;  
 Then did Nicolette begin,  
 "Aucassin, sweet handsome love,  
 To what country shall we go?"  
 "My sweet love, how should I know?  
 I do not care where we go  
 In the woods or on the roads  
 So long as I am with you."  
 They passed the hills and valleys,  
 The villages and cities,  
 And at dawn they reached the sea  
 And dismounted on the sand  
 Near the seashore.

## XXVIII

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

Aucassin had dismounted, both he and his love, as you have heard and understood. He held his horse by the reins, and his love by the hand, and so did they begin to go along the shore. And Aucassin looked toward the sea and saw a ship of merchants who were sailing near the coast.

He hailed them and they came to him, and he made such terms with them that they took them into their ship. And when they were on the high seas, a storm arose, great and marvelous, which drove them from land to land, until they arrived in a strange country and entered into the port of the Castle of Torelore. Then they asked whose land it was, and they told them that it was the land of the King of Torelore. Then they asked what sort of a man he was, and if he had a war, and they told him, "Yes, a great one."

He took leave of the merchants, and they commended him to God. He mounted on his horse, his sword girded on, and his love in front of him, and wandered until he came to the castle. He asked where the king was, and they told him that he was lying in bed with child.

"And where is his wife, then?"

And they told him that she was with the army, and that she had

taken away with her everybody in the country. Aucassin heard it, and it seemed to him a great marvel. He came up to the palace and dismounted—both he and his love; and she held the horse, and he went up into the palace, his sword girded on, and wandered about until he came into the room where the king was lying.

XXIX

*Now it is sung*

In the room came Aucassin  
The courtous and the noble.  
He came straight up to the bed  
On which the king was lying.  
Right in front of him he stopped  
And spoke; listen what he said:  
"Fool, what are you doing here?"  
Said the king, "I am with child.  
When my month shall be fulfilled  
And I shall be well again,  
I shall then be church'd at mass  
As my ancestors have done:  
Then from carrying on great war  
With my enemies again,  
I shall never stop."

XXX

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

When Aucassin heard the king speak thus, he took all the bed clothes which were upon him and threw them around the room. He saw just in back of him a big stick. He took it, turned about, and he struck him and beat him so much that he almost killed him.

"Ah, fair sir," said the king, "what do you want of me? Have you gone crazy that you beat me in my own house?"

"By God's heart," said Aucassin, "evil son of a slut, I will kill you, if you do not swear to me that never again shall a man in your land be brought to bed with child."

He swore it, and when he had heard him swear it:

"Sir," said Aucassin, "now lead me there where your wife is with the army."

"Sir, willingly," said the king.

He mounted on his horse, and Aucassin mounted on his, and Nicolette remained in the chambers of the queen. And the king and Aucassin rode along until they came to the place where the queen was, and they found there a battle of rotted wild apples, and of eggs and of fresh cheeses; and Aucassin began to look at them, and he was very, very much astonished indeed.

## XXXI

*Now it is sung*

Aucassin had stopped and now,  
 Elbow on his saddle-bow,  
 He begins to marvel at  
 This violent battlefield,  
 For both sides had brought with them  
 Cheeses quite fresh from the vats,  
 With wood apples rotted soft,  
 And some large field mushrooms too.  
 He who most stirs up the fords  
 Is proclaimed the lord of lords.  
 Aucassin the valiant knight  
 Stared at them with all his might  
 And began to laugh.

## XXXII

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

When Aucassin saw this marvel, he came to the king; so did he speak to him.

"Sir," said Aucassin, "are these your enemies?"

"Yes, sir," said the king.

"And would you like me to avenge you on them?"

"Yes," said he, "if you like."

And Aucassin put his hand on his sword, so did he rush among them and began to strike right and left and killed many of them. When the king saw that he was killing them, he took him by the bridle and said:

"Ah, fair sir, don't kill them like this."

"What?" said Aucassin, "don't you want me to avenge you?"

"Sir," said the king, "you have done too much. It is not our custom to kill each other."

The enemy turned and fled, and the king and Aucassin returned to the castle of Torelore. And the people of the country told the king that he should cast Aucassin out of the land and detain Nicolette as a wife for his son since she seemed, indeed, to be a woman of high lineage. Nicolette heard it, and was not at all glad about it, and she began to say:

## XXXIII

*Now it is sung*

"O, sir king of Torelore,"  
 Said the lovely Nicolette,  
 "Your folk take me for a fool;

When my love embraces me  
And feels me plump and tender,  
Then am I in such a state  
That neither songs nor dances,  
Fiddle, harp, nor viol gay,  
Nor the pleasures of the play  
Are worth a thing."

XXXIV

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

Aucassin was in the castle of Torelore, and Nicolette, his love; and he had great delight and great ease that he had with him Nicolette, his sweet love, whom he loved so much. And while he was in such ease and in such delight, a fleet of the Saracens came by sea and assailed the castle; so did they take it by force. And they took all the treasure and led the men and women away captive. They took Nicolette and Aucassin, and they bound Aucassin's hands and his feet, and they threw him into one ship and Nicolette into another. And there arose a storm on the sea, which separated them.

The ship in which Aucassin was went skimming over the sea until it arrived at the Castle of Beaucaire. The people of the country ran to the wreckage, and they found Aucassin, and so did they recognize him. When those of Beaucaire saw their young lord, they made great joy over it, for Aucassin had lived in the castle of Torelore for three full years, and his father and mother were dead. They led him to the Castle of Beaucaire; so did they all become his men, and he held his land in peace.

XXXV

*Now it is sung*

Aucassin has gone away  
To his city of Beaucaire.  
All the country and the realm  
He now held in greatest calm,  
Swore by God of Majesty  
That he much more regretted  
Nicolette with clearest face  
Than all of his relations  
Though they all were dead and gone.  
"Sweetheart with the clearest face,  
I don't know where you may be.  
God has never made that place  
Either on the land or sea  
Where if I thought to find you  
I would not look."

## XXXVI

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

Now we will leave off about Aucassin and talk of Nicolette. The ship in which Nicolette was belonged to the king of Carthage, and he was her father, and she had twelve brothers, all princes and kings. When they saw Nicolette so beautiful, they offered her very, very great honors and made a feast for her, and often did they ask her who she was, for indeed she seemed to be a very noble lady and of high lineage. But she didn't know how to tell them who she was, for she had been stolen away as a little child. They sailed along until they arrived below the city of Carthage; and when Nicolette saw the walls of the castle and the country, she recognized that she had been brought up there and stolen from there as a little child. But she was not so small a child that she didn't know very well that she had been the daughter of the king of Carthage, and that she had been brought up in the city.

## XXXVII

*Now it is sung*

Nicolette, high-born and wise,  
Now has landed on the shore,  
Saw the buildings and the walls  
And the castle and the halls.  
Seeing which, she cried, "Alas,  
I am of a high descent,  
Daughter to the Carthage king  
And cousin to the emir!  
Savage people hold me here.  
Aucassin, well-born and wise,  
Honorable, noble lord,  
Your sweet love so urges me,  
Speaks to me and troubles me,  
God the Spirit grant me this:  
That you hold me in your arms,  
Once again my forehead kiss,  
Kiss my mouth and kiss my face,  
My sweet young lord."

## XXXVIII

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

When the king of Carthage heard Nicolette speak in that way, he threw his arms around her neck.

"Fair sweet love," said he, "tell me who you are; don't you be afraid of me."



"Sir," said she, "I am the daughter of the king of Carthage, and I was stolen as a little child, fully fifteen years ago."

When he heard her speak thus, he knew well that she was speaking the truth; so did he make a very great holiday for her, and led her into the palace with great honor as the daughter of a king. For a husband he wished to give her a king of the pagans, but she had no desire to get married. She was there three or four full days. She reflected by what device she would be able to search for Aucassin. She bought herself a viol and learned to play it, until they wanted one day to marry her off to a rich pagan king. And she slipped out that night and came to the seaport; so did she take shelter with a poor woman on the shore. And she took an herb and smeared her head and face with it so that she was all black and stained. And she had a coat made and a cloak and a shirt and underbreeches, and rigged herself out in the guise of a jongleur. So she took her viol and came up to a sailor, and she made such terms with him that he took her aboard his ship. They raised their sails, and so did they sail away over the high seas until they arrived at the land of Provence. And Nicolette started out and took her viol; so did she go along playing through the country until she came to the Castle of Beaucaire, there where Aucassin was.

## XXXIX

*Now it is sung*

At Beaucaire beneath the tower  
 There was Aucassin one day  
 Seated on a stone stairway.  
 Round him were his barons proud.  
 He saw the grass and flowers  
 And heard the small birds singing  
 And remembered of his love,  
 For the noble Nicolette,  
 Whom he'd loved so many days.  
 He gives way to sighs and tears.  
 Look, below is Nicolette  
 With her viol and her bow.  
 Now she speaks and tells her tale,  
 "Listen to me, noble lords,  
 Those above and those below,  
 Would you like to hear a song  
 Of a proud lord, Aucassin,  
 Of the noble Nicolette,  
 How their love endured so long,  
 How he sought her in the wood;

At Torelore in prison  
 The pagans one day put them.  
 Naught of Aucassin we know,  
 But the noble Nicolette  
 At Carthage is in prison.  
 Now her father loves her well  
 Who is lord of all that realm.  
 As bride they wish to give her  
 To a wretched pagan king.  
 Nicolette won't think of it,  
 For she loves a fair young lord  
 By the name of Aucassin.  
 Well she swears by God's own name  
 That she will never marry  
 If she cannot have the one  
     Whom she so loves."

## XL

*Now they tell and relate and continue the tale*

When Aucassin heard Nicolette speak thus, he was very glad, and he drew her aside and asked her:

"Fair sweet friend," said Aucassin, "do you know anything of this Nicolette of whom you have just sung?"

"Sir, yes," said she, "I know of her as the most noble creature, and the most gentle and the most wise that was ever born. She is the daughter of the King of Carthage, who took her when Aucassin was taken; so did he lead her into the city of Carthage until he had learned indeed that she was his daughter. He made a great festival; and he wished each day to give her for a husband one of the most exalted kings in all Spain, but she would rather let herself be hanged or burned than take any one of them, however rich he might be."

"Ah, fair sweet friend," said Count Aucassin, "if you would go back to that land and tell her to come here to speak to me, I would give you as much of my wealth as you would dare demand or take. And know that for love of her, I have no desire to take a wife however high her lineage may be, but only to wait for her. For I will have no wife if it isn't she. And if I had known where to find her, I would not be looking for her now."

"Sir," said she, "if you would do this, I would go and seek her for you and for her, whom I love very much."

He swore it to her, and then he had her given twenty pounds. She started to leave him, and he wept for the sweetness of Nicolette. When she saw him weeping:

"Sir," she said, "don't be dismayed, for in a little time I will have her brought into this town; so you will see her."

And when Aucassin heard her, he was very, very glad. And she went away from him; so did she go through the town to the house of the Viscountess, for the Viscount, her god-father, was dead. There she stayed, and she talked to her until she had revealed her plan, and the Viscountess had recognized her and knew indeed that it was Nicolette whom she had reared. So did she have her washed and bathed, and she stayed there eight full days. Then she took an herb which is called Clarity and smeared herself with it. So was she as beautiful as she had ever been at any day. And she dressed herself in rich cloth of silk, of which the lady had much.

She sat in her chamber upon a quilt of stitched silk cloth, and she called the lady and told her that she should go for Aucassin, her love. She did it; and when she came to the palace, she found Aucassin who was weeping and regretting Nicolette his love because she delayed so long, and the lady called him and said to him:

“Aucassin, don’t cry any more, but come along with me, and I will show you the thing that you love most in all the world, for it is Nicolette, your sweet love, who has come from distant lands to find you.”

And Aucassin was overjoyed!

XLI

*Now it is sung*

Now when Aucassin had heard:  
Of his love with clearest face,  
How she had come to this land,  
Glad was he, never more so.  
With the lady has he gone;  
Straight to that house did he ride.  
There they entered in a room  
Where Nicolette was sitting.  
When she saw her lover there,  
Glad was she, never more so.  
Up she jumped and ran to him.  
And when Aucassin saw her,  
With both arms stretched out to her,  
He embraced her tenderly  
While he kissed her eyes and face.  
All that night they left them thus.  
In the morning, the next day,  
Aucassin made her his wife.  
Lady of Beaucaire she was;  
Then they lived for many days  
And much pleasure did they have.  
Now has Aucassin his joy

And Nicolette hers likewise.  
 Our *chanteuble* takes its end.  
 I cannot tell you more.

### Our Lady's Tumbler\*

In the "Lives of the Fathers", the matter of which is of profit, a story is told that is not so without worth that it may not well be related. Now I will tell and repeat to you that which happened to a minstrel. This man had journeyed so much to and fro, and been so prodigal in his way of life, that at last he decided to become a monk of a holy order, for he was weary of the world. Therefore he entered this holy profession at Clairvaux.

And when this tumbler, who was so graceful, and fair, and comely, and well formed, became a monk, he knew not how to perform any office that was to be done there. Of a truth, he had lived only to tumble, to turn somersaults, to spring, and to dance. To leap and to jump, this he knew, but naught else, and truly no other learning had he, neither the "Paternoster", nor the "Canticles", nor the "Credo", nor the "Ave Maria", nor anything that could make for his salvation. He was greatly frightened in their midst, for he knew not what to say, or what to do of all that was to be done there. And because of this, he was very sad and pensive. And everywhere he saw the monks and the novices, each one serving God in such office as he held. He saw the priests at the altars, for such was their office, the deacons at the Gospels, and the subdeacons at the epistles. And at the proper time, the acolytes straightway rang the bell at the vigils. One recited a verse, and another a lesson, and the young priests were at the psalter, and the novices at the misereres, and the least experienced were at the paternosters, for in this way was their work ordered. And he looked everywhere throughout the offices and the cloisters, and saw hidden in the corners here four, here three, here two, here one. And he observed each one as closely as he was able. One made lamentation, another wept, and another groaned and sighed. And much did he wonder what ailed them.

And at length he said, "Holy Mary, what ails these folk that they conduct themselves thus, and make such a show of grief? They must be much upset, it seems to me, since they all make such a great outcry." And then he said, "Ah, miserable being! By the Holy Mary what have I said? I suppose that they are praying for God's grace. But, unhappy being that I am, what am I doing here, when he who,

\* Our text is a translation by Alice Kemp-Welch, slightly revised by the present editor. From *Of the Tumbler of Our Lady and Other Miracles* by Alice

Kemp-Welch; Chatto & Windus, London, 1903. Reprinted, with revisions, by permission of the publisher.

in his calling, serves God with all his might, is thus enslaved? Never shall I render any service here, for naught can I do or say. Very unfortunate was I when I became a monk, for I know not how, even, to pray aright. I look hither and thither, and do nothing, save waste time and eat bread to no purpose. If in this I am found out, I shall be utterly undone. I am a lively fellow, and if I do nothing here but eat, I shall be turned out into the fields. Very miserable am I in this high office!"

Then he wept to allay his grief, and truly did he desire to be dead. "Holy Mother Mary," said he, "beseech your sovereign Father of His grace to guide me, and to bestow upon me such wisdom that I may be able to serve both Him and you in such a way as to be worthy of the food which I eat here, for well I know that now I do wrong."

And when he had thus made a lament, he went prying about the Church until he entered a crypt, and he crouched down near an altar, and hid himself there as best he could. And above the altar was the image of Our Lady, the Holy Mary. And in no way did it surprise him that he felt in safety there, and he perceived not that it was God, who well knows how to guide His own, who had led him there.

And when he had heard the bell ring for the Mass, he rushed forth trembling from the crypt. "Ah!" said he, "I am like a traitor! Even now each one is saying his response, and here am I like a tethered ox, and I do nothing here but browse, and waste food in vain. Shall I therefore neither speak nor act? By the Mother of God, this will I do, and never shall I be blamed for it. I will do that which I have learnt, and thus, after my own manner, will I serve the Mother of God in her Church. The others do service with song, and I will do service with tumbling."

And he took off his habit, and then stripped himself, and laid his garments beside the altar, but so that his body should not be uncovered he kept on a tunic, which was very clinging and close fitting. It was little better than a shift; nevertheless his body was wholly covered. And thus he was fitly clad, and he girded his tunic, and duly prepared himself; and then he turned to the image and gazed on it humbly. "Lady," said he, "to your keeping I commend my body and my soul. Gentle Queen and Lady, despise not that which I am acquainted with, for, without ado, I will endeavor to serve you in good faith, if it be that God will aid me."

Then he began to turn somersaults, now high, now low, first forwards, then backwards, and then he fell on his knees before the image, and bowed his head. "Ah, very gentle Queen!" said he, "of your pity, and of your generosity, despise not my service." Then he tumbled, and leaped, and turned gaily the somersault of Metz.

And he bowed to the image, and worshipped it, and thus he paid homage to it as well as he knew how. And presently he turned the French somersault, and then the somersault of Champagne, and after that, those of Spain and of Brittany, and then that of Lorraine. And he exerted all of his strength and skill.

And after that, he did the Roman somersault, and then he put his hand before his face, and turned very gracefully, and looked very humbly at the image of the Mother of God. "Lady," said he, "I do homage to you with my heart, and my body, and my feet, and my hands, for naught but this do I understand. Now would I be your gleeman. Yonder they are singing, but I have come here to divert you. Lady, you who can protect me, for God's sake do not despise me." Then he beat his breast, and sighed, and mourned very grievously that he knew not how to do service in any other manner. And then he turned a somersault backwards. "Lady," said he, "so help me God, never before have I done this. Lady! that one would have his utmost desire, who could dwell with you in your most glorious mansion! For God's sake, Lady, receive me there. I do this for your sake, and not at all for my own." Then he again turned the somersault of Metz, and performed many tumbles and capers.

And when he heard the monks celebrating, he began to exert himself, and so long as the Mass lasted, he ceased not to dance, and to jump, and to leap, until he was on the point of fainting, and he could not stand up; and thus he fell to the ground, and dropped from sheer fatigue. And just as the grease pours from spitted meat, so the sweat poured from him, from head to foot. "Lady," said he, "no more can I do now, but truly I shall come back again."

And he was quite overcome by heat. And he took up his clothing, and when he was dressed, he took his leave, and bowed to the image, and went his way. "Farewell, very gentle friend," said he. "For God's sake, grieve not at all, for if I am able, and it is permitted me, I will come back, for each hour I wish to serve you to the utmost of my power, so gracious are you."

And for a long time he led this life, and, at each hour precisely, he returned to the image, to render service and homage. In truth, so greatly did it please him, and with such good will did he do this, that never a day was he so tired that he did not perform his very best to delight the Mother of God, and never did he desire to do other service.

It was well known that he went each day into the crypt, but no one, save God, knew what he did there, nor would he, for all the riches of the whole world, have had any, save the supreme God alone, know of his doings.

Think you now that God would have prized his service if he had not loved Him? By no means, however much he tumbled. But He

prized it because of his love. Much labour and fatigue, many fasts and vigils, many tears and sighs and groans and prayers, much diligence in discipline, both at Mass and at matins, the bestowal of all that you have and the payment of whatever you owe—if you love not God with all your heart, all these are wholly thrown away in such manner. Understand well that they avail not for true salvation. Of a truth, without love and without pity, before God all counts for naught. God asks not for gold or for silver, but only for true love in the hearts of men, and this one loved God truly. And because of this, God prized his service.

For a long time the good man lived thus, but for how long he lived so, contented, I cannot tell you. But in the course of time great trouble came to him, for one of the monks who in his heart greatly blamed him because he came not to matins, said that he would never leave off until he knew who he was, and what he was good for, and in what manner he earned his bread. And so closely did the monk pursue him, and follow him, and keep watch on him, that he distinctly saw him perform his service in the simple manner which I have described to you.

"By my faith," said he, "he has a good time of it, and much greater pleasure, it seems to me, than we have all together. While the others are at prayer, and at work in the house, this one dances with as much vigour as if he had a hundred silver marks. Well indeed he performs his service, and in this manner he pays us that which is his due. A goodly proceeding, this, to be sure! We sing for him, and he tumbles for us! We pray for him, and he plays for us! If we weep, he soothes us. I wish that all the convent could see him at this very moment just as I do, even if I had to fast for it till dusk. Not one would be there, I think, who would be able to keep from laughing if he witnessed the tumbling of this fellow, who thus kills himself, and who so excites himself by tumbling that he has no pity on himself. God counts it unto him for penance, for he does it without evil intent, and, certainly, I hold it to be not wicked, for, as I believe, he does it in good faith, for he wishes not to be idle."

And the monk saw how he laboured without ceasing all day long. And he laughed much, and made merry over the matter, but it caused him sorrow as well as merriment. And he went to the abbot, and reported to him, from beginning to end, all that he had learnt, just as you have heard it.

And the abbot arose, and said to the monk, "On your vow of obedience, I command that you keep silence, and speak not of this elsewhere, and that you so well observe this command, that you speak not of this matter save to me alone; and we will both go thither, and we shall see if this is so, and we will beseech the

heavenly King, and His very gentle and dear Mother, who is so precious, and of so great renown, that she, of her sweetness, will pray of her Son, her Father, and her Lord, that if it so pleases Him, He will this day suffer us to witness this service in such a way that God may be the more loved on account of this, and that, if thus it pleases Him, the good man may not be found worthy of blame for it."

And then they went thither very quietly, and without delay they hid themselves in a secret corner near the altar, so that the tumbler did not see them. And the abbot, watching there, observed all the service of the novice, and the many somersaults which he turned, and how he capered, and danced, and bowed before the image, and jumped, and leaped, until he was ready to faint. And so greatly was the tumbler overcome by fatigue, that he fell heavily to the ground, and so exhausted was he, that he sweated all over from his efforts, so that the sweat ran down the middle of the crypt. But in a little, the Mother of God, whom he served entirely without guile, came to his aid, and well she knew how to help him.

And then the abbot looked, and he saw descend from the vaulting so glorious a lady, that never had he seen one so fair or so richly crowned, and never had another so beautiful been created. Her vesture was all wrought with gold and precious stones, and with her were angels and archangels from the heavens above, who gathered around the tumbler, and cheered and sustained him. And when they were grouped about him, he was wholly comforted, and they made ready to tend him, for they desired to repay him for the services which he had rendered unto their lady, who is so precious a jewel. And the sweet and noble Queen took a white cloth, and with it she very gently fanned her minstrel as he lay before the altar. And the noble and gracious Lady fanned his neck and body and face to cool him, and took great pains to tend him, and gave herself up to the care of him; but of this the good man took no heed, for he neither perceived, nor did he know, that he was in such fair company.

And the holy angels who lingered with him, paid him much honour, but the Lady no longer remained there, and she made the sign of the cross as she turned away; and the holy angels, who greatly rejoiced in keeping watch over their companion, took charge of him, and awaited the hour when God would take him away from this life so that they could carry away his soul.

And four times the abbot and the monk witnessed without hindrance how each hour he went there, and how the Mother of God came there to aid and succour her liegeman, for well she knows how to protect her own. And the abbot had much joy of it, for he had been very desirous to know the truth concerning it. Now God had



truly shown him that the services which this poor man rendered were quite pleasing to Him. And the monk was quite bewildered by it, and from emotion he glowed like fire. "Sir," said he to the abbot, "this is a holy man whom I see here. If I have said anything that is evil concerning him, it is right that my body should make amends for it. Therefore assign me a penance, for without doubt he is altogether an upright man. Truly we have seen all, and we can no longer be mistaken."

And the abbot said, "You speak rightly. God has indeed made us understand that He loves him with a very great love. And now I straightaway command unto you that, in virtue of obedience, and so that you fall not under condemnation, you speak to no one of that which you have seen, save to God or to me."

"Sir," said he, "to this do I assent."

And at these words they departed, and no longer did they stay in the crypt, and the tumbler did not remain, but when he had done all his service, he clothed himself again in his garments, and went to busy himself in the monastery. Thus passed the time, until that, a little while after, it came to pass that the abbot sent for him.

And when he heard that he was sent for, and that it was the abbot who made enquiry for him, so greatly was he troubled that he did not know what he should say. "Alas," said he, "I am found out. Never a day passes without distress, or without toil or disgrace, for my service counts for naught. I suppose it is not pleasing to God. Gentle Lady, Holy Mary, how troubled is my mind! I know not, Lady, from whom to seek counsel, so come now to my aid. At the first word, they will say 'Away with you!' Woe is me! How shall I be able to answer when I know not one single word with which to make explanation? But what good is this? I am obliged to go."

And weeping, so that his face was all wet, he came before the abbot and knelt before him in tears. "Sir," said he, "for God's sake, have mercy! Would you drive me away? Tell me all your commands, and I will do all your bidding."

Then said the abbot, "This I wish to know, and I want you to answer truthfully. You have been here for a long time, and I want to know by what services, and in what manner, you earn your bread."

"Alas," said he, "well knew I that it all would come out, and that when all my actions were known, no one would have anything more to do with me. Sir," said he, "now I will go away. Miserable am I, and miserable shall I be, for never can I do anything that is right."

Then the abbot replied, "I did not mean that at all, but I pray you, and further, I command you, that, in virtue of obedience, you wholly reveal your thoughts to me, and tell me in what manner you serve us in our monastery."

"Sir," said he, "this will be the death of me. This command will kill me."

Then at once he told him, painful though it was, the whole story of his life, in such a way that he omitted nothing, relating it just as I have related it to you.

And the holy abbot turned to him, and, weeping, raised him up. And he kissed both his eyes. "Brother," said he, "be silent now, for truly do I promise you that you shall be at peace with us. God grant that we may have your fellowship so long as we deserve it. We shall be good friends. Fair, gentle brother, pray for me and I will pray, in return, for you. And so I beseech and command you, my dear friend, that you forthwith render this service openly, just as you have done it, and still better, if you know how."

"Sir," said he, "are you in earnest?"

"Yes, truly," said the abbot, "and I charge you, on pain of penance, that you no longer doubt it."

Then was the good man so very joyous, so the story relates, that he scarcely knew what he did. But despite himself, he was constrained to rest, for he had become quite pale. And when he was come to himself again, he was so overcome with joy, that he was seized with a sickness of which he died within a short time. But very cheerfully did he perform his service without ceasing, morning and evening, by night and by day, so that not an hour did he miss, until he fell ill. Then such great sickness laid hold upon him that he could not move from his bed. But what distressed him most, since he never complained of his sufferings, was that he could not pay for his sustenance. This troubled him much, and besides, he feared that his penance would be in vain, because he could not continue his customary service; and he felt that he deserved blame. And the good man, who was so filled with anguish, besought God that He would receive him before more shame came upon him. For he was so distressed that his actions had become known that he could not endure it. And he was compelled to lie down forthwith.

The holy abbot held him in great honour, and he and his monks went each hour to chant at his bedside, and such great joy had he in that which was sung to him of God, that he did not at all long for Poitou,<sup>1</sup> so much did it please him to learn that all would be forgiven him. And he made a good confession and repentance, but nevertheless he was fearful. And, as I have told you, at last his death took place.

The abbot was there, and all his monks, and the novices and good folk, who kept watch over him very humbly, and quite clearly they saw a wonderful miracle. They saw how, at his death, the an-

1. a region in France. The meaning is that he had no longing to return to secular life.

gels, and the Mother of God, and the archangels, were ranged about him. And there, also, were evil, and cruel, and violent devils, waiting to take possession of his soul—and this was a fact! But to no purpose had they so long lain in wait for him, and striven so earnestly for him, and pursued him, for now they had no power over his soul. And forthwith his soul left his body, but by no means was it lost, for the Mother of God received it. And the holy angels who were there sang for joy, and then they departed, and carried it to heaven, and this was seen by all the monks, and by all the others who were there.

Now they fully knew and perceived that God had willed it that the love of His good servant should no longer be hidden, and that all should know and perceive his goodness, and they had great joy and wonder at it. And they paid much honour to his body, and carried it into the Church, and fervently celebrated the service of God. And they buried him with honour in the choir of the mother-church, and kept watch over him, as over the body of a saint.

Thus died the minstrel. Cheerfully did he tumble, and cheerfully did he serve, for the which he merited great honour, and there was none to compare with him.

Now let us pray God, without ceasing, that He may permit us to serve Him so worthily that we may be deserving of His love. The story of the tumbler has been told.

## DANTE ALIGHIERI

(1265–1321)

The Divine Comedy (*La divina commedia*)\*

*Hell (Inferno)*

### CANTO I

[It is the eve of Good Friday, 1300, and Dante is thirty-five years old. He comes to himself in the darkness of the wood of Error, not knowing how he had lost the true way. Gaining the foot of a hill, the Delectable Mountain, or hill of virtue, he is cheered by the morning sun, and begins the ascent, but is baffled by a Leopard (Lust), then dismayed by a Lion (Pride), and a She-Wolf (Avarice). Turning to run back to the valley, he is met by the spirit of Virgil, the poet of his adoration, who in the Vision typifies human

\* Abridged. Written in the early fourteenth century. The translation and headnotes are by Lawrence Binyon; the footnotes are by C. H. Grandgent, from *La divina commedia di Dante Alighieri*, edited and annotated by C. H. Grand-

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wisdom. Virgil tells him that he cannot pass the She-Wolf, though a savior of Italy is one day to arise who will chase her into Hell; and Dante is to follow him and be shown the spirits who are in pain and have no hope, and the spirits who through pain are to come to bliss; and from these he will be led by another (Beatrice, Dante's early love, typifying Heavenly Wisdom) to see the spirits in Paradise. Dante follows in Virgil's steps.]

Midway life's journey I was made aware  
 That I strayed into a dark forest,  
 And the right path appeared not anywhere.  
 Ah, tongue cannot describe how it oppressed,  
 This wood, so harsh, dismal and wild, that fear 5  
 At thought of it strikes now into my breast.  
 So bitter it is, death is scarce bitterer.  
 But, for the good it was my hap to find,  
 I speak of the other things that I saw there.  
 I cannot well remember in my mind 10  
 How I came thither, so was I immersed  
 In sleep, when the true way I left behind.  
 But when my footsteps had attained the first  
 Slope of a hill, at the end of that drear vale  
 Which with such terror had my spirit pierced, 15  
 I looked up, and beheld its shoulders pale  
 Already in clothing of that planet's light  
 Which guideth men on all roads without fail.  
 Then had my bosom a little of respite  
 From what had all the pool of my heart tost 20  
 While I so piteously endured the night.  
 As one, whom pantings of his breath exhaust,  
 Escaped from the deep water to the shore,  
 Turns back and gazes on the danger crost,  
 So my mind, fleeing still and stricken sore, 25  
 Turned back to gaze astonished on that pass  
 Which none hath ever left alive before.  
 When my tired body had rested a brief space  
 I trod anew the slope, desert and bare,  
 With the firmer foot still in the lower place. 30  
 And at the ascent, as 't were on the first stair,  
 Behold! a Leopard, very swift and light

17. "That planet": the sun, which is just rising. The sun, here and elsewhere, typifies enlightenment, perhaps righteous choice, the intelligent use of the free will.

30. This perplexing and much discussed line seems to describe the act

of cautiously feeling one's way up a slope.

32. When Dante tries to scale the hill, three beasts beset his path. These animals evidently stand for Dante's vicious habits, which prevent his reform. The ravening wolf is Incontinence

And covered with a hide of mottled hair.  
 And it would not depart, but opposite  
 On my path faced me, so that many a time 35  
 I turned me to go back, because of it.  
 The moment was the morning's earliest prime,  
 And the sun mounted up, accompanied  
 By those stars that with him began to climb  
 When divine love first made through heaven to glide 40  
 Those things of beauty, so that hope I caught  
 Of that wild creature with the gaudy hide.  
 The hour of time and the sweet season wrought  
 Thus on me; yet not so much, but when appeared  
 A Lion, terror to my heart he brought. 45  
 He seemed coming against me with head reared  
 Ravening with hunger, and so terrible  
 That the very air seemed of his breath afear'd;  
 And a She-Wolf, that in her famished fell  
 Looked all infuriate craving (she hath meant 50  
 To many ere now that they in misery dwell).  
 On me the grimness of her aspect sent  
 A burden that my spirit overpowered,  
 So that I lost the hope of the ascent.  
 As one that is with lust of gain devoured, 55  
 When comes the time that makes him lose, will rack  
 His thoughts lamenting all his hope deflowered,  
 To such state brought me, in dread of his attack,  
 That restless beast, who by degrees perforce  
 To where the Sun is silent drove me back. 60  
 While I was rushing on my downward course  
 Suddenly on my sight there seemed to start  
 One who appeared from a long silence hoarse.  
 When I beheld him in that great desert  
 "Have pity on me!" I cried out to his face, 65  
 "Whatsoever—shade or very man—thou art."  
 He answered me: "Not man; man once I was.  
 My parents both were of the Lombard name,  
 Of Mantua by their country and by their race.  
*Sub Julio* was I born, though late I came: 70

of any kind, the raging lion is Violence, the swift and stealthy leopard is Fraud. We may understand, from the episode, that Dante could perhaps have overcome the graver sins of Fraud and Violence, but was unable, without heavenly aid, to rid himself of some of the habits of Incontinence.

39-41. It was believed that when the universe was created, the heavenly

bodies were placed in their vernal positions. The sun is in the sign of Aries from March 21 to April 20 inclusive.

63. At this crisis Reason, personified in Virgil, comes, at divine bidding, to the sinner's rescue. The voice of Reason has not been heeded for so long that it comes faintly to the sinner's ear.

70-71. "*Sub Julio*": at the time of Julius Caesar; but so late that he was

In Rome the good Augustus on me shone,  
 In the time of the false Gods of lying fame.  
 Poet was I, and sang of that just son  
 Of old Anchises, who came out from Troy  
 After the burning of proud Ilion. 71  
 But thou, why turn'st thou back to such annoy?  
 Why climbest not the Mount Delectable  
 The cause and the beginning of all joy?"  
 "And art thou, then, that Virgil, and that well  
 Which pours abroad so ample a stream of song?" 80  
 I answered him abashed, with front that fell.  
 "O glory and light of all the poets' throng!  
 May the ardent study and great love serve me now  
 Which made me to peruse thy book so long!  
 Thou art my Master and my Author thou. 85  
 Thou only art he from whom the noble style  
 I took, wherein my merit men avow.  
 Regard yon beast from which I made recoil!  
 Help me from her, renowned sage, for she  
 Puts all my veins and pulses in turmoil." 90  
 "Needs must thou find another way to flee,"  
 He answered, seeing my eyes with weeping fill,  
 "If thou from this wild place wouldst get thee free;  
 Because this beast, at which thou criest still,  
 Suffreth none to go upon her path, 95  
 But hindereth and entangleth till she kill,  
 And hath a nature so perverse in wrath,  
 Her craving maw never is satiated  
 But after food the fiercer hunger hath.  
 Many are the creatures with whom she hath wed, 100  
 And shall be yet more, till appear the Hound  
 By whom in pain she shall be stricken dead.  
 He will not batten on pelf or fruitful ground,  
 But wisdom, love, and virtue shall he crave.

identified with the reign of Augustus, and not that of Caesar. Virgil was barely twenty-six when Caesar perished.

72. Repeatedly Virgil makes pathetic but always dignified and reticent allusion to his lack of Christianity and his consequent eternal exclusion from the presence of God.

73. "That just son": Aeneas.

84. We learn from *Inf.* XX, 114 that Dante knew the *Aeneid* by heart.

101-105. This Hound is obviously a redeemer who shall set the world aright. If we compare this passage with another prophecy in *Purg.* XXXIII, 40-45, it is tolerably clear that he is to be

a temporal rather than a spiritual savior—a great Emperor, whose mission it shall be to establish the balance of power, restore justice, and guide erring humanity. Such an Emperor, destined to come at the end of the world, was not unknown to legend. As the prediction was still unfulfilled at the time of the writing, Dante naturally made it vague. We know that the poet entertained great hopes of the youthful leader, Can Grande della Scala, in Dante's last years the chief representative of the Imperial power in Italy. "Feltro and Feltro" may point to the towns of Feltre and Monte Feltro.

"Twixt Feltro and Feltro shall his folk abound. 105  
 He that abased Italy shall save,  
 For which Euryalus, Turnus, Nisus died,  
 For which her virgin blood Camilla gave.  
 And her through every city far and wide  
 Back into Hell's deep dungeon shall he chase, 110  
 Whence envy first let loose her ravening stride.  
 Wherefore I judge this fittest for thy case  
 That I should lead thee, and thou follow in faith,  
 To journey hence through an eternal place,  
 Where thou shalt hear cries of despairing breath, 115  
 Shall look on the ancient spirits in their pain,  
 Such that each calls out for a second death.  
 And thou shalt see those who in fire refrain  
 From sorrow, since their hope is in the end,  
 Whensoever it be, to the blessed to attain. 120  
 To whom if thou desirest to ascend  
 There shall be a spirit worthier than I,  
 When I depart, who shall thy steps befriend.  
 For that Lord Emperor who reigns on high,  
 Because I was not to his law submiss, 125  
 Wills not that I to his city come too nigh.  
 In every part he ruleth, and all is his,  
 There is his city, there is his high seat:  
 O happy, whom he chooseth for that bliss!"  
 And I to him: "O Poet, I entreat 130  
 In the name of that God whom thou didst not know,  
 So that I 'scape this ill and worse ill yet,  
 Lead me where thou hast spoken of but now,  
 So that my eyes St. Peter's gate may find  
 And those whom thou portrayest in such woe! 135  
 Then he moved onward: and I went behind.

CANTO II

[As the evening of the first day falls, Dante begins to doubt his courage for the journey. He recalls the visit to the underworld of Aeneas (told by Virgil in the Sixth *Acneid*) and of St. Paul (the theme of a medieval legend) and declares himself unworthy to follow such as these. Virgil then discloses that Beatrice came from Heaven, prompted by Divine Grace, to ask him to rescue Dante from the dangers into which he has fallen. Dante's courage at once revives, and he accepts his mission.]

108. Camilla, a warrior virgin who fought against the Trojans.

118-119. The souls in Purgatory.

122. Beatrice.

134. The gate of Purgatory, opened only to the elect.

The day was going, and the darkened air  
 Was taking from its toil each animal  
 That is on the earth; I only, alone there,  
 Essayed to arm my spirit against all  
 The terror of the journey and pity's plea, 5  
 Which memory, that errs not, shall recall.  
 O Muses, O high Genius, strengthen me!  
 O Memory, that what I saw hast writ,  
 Here shall be made known thine integrity.  
 I began: "Poet, who guidest now my feet, 10  
 Look if the virtue in me avail to endure  
 The arduous pass, ere thou trust me to it.  
 Thou sayest the father of Silvius went secure  
 In his corruptible body, and that world knew  
 Which Death knows not, of all his senses sure. 15  
 But if the Adversary of Sin that duc  
 Of favour gave him, weighing the high effect  
 And who, and what, should be his great issue,  
 'This seems not unmeet to the intellect;  
 For he was born to father and prepare 20  
 Rome and her Empire, as high heaven's elect,  
 Both of which, the true history to declare,  
 Were the foundations of that sainted spot  
 Which is the seat of greatest Peter's heir.  
 By this adventure, whence thy praise he got, 25  
 He learned things that for him were argument  
 Of victory, and the Papal Mantle wrought.  
 Afterwards too the Chosen Vessel went  
 The confirmation of that faith to bring  
 Which is for way of our salvation meant. 30  
 But I, why go? By whose commissioning?  
 I am not Aeneas, no, nor Paul: too weak  
 I, and others also, deem me for this thing.  
 If I resign me, then, that world to seek,  
 I fear the quest for folly be aspersed. 35  
 Thou art wise and canst divine more than I speak."  
 And like one who unwill's what he willed first  
 And new thoughts change the intention that he had,  
 So that his resolution is reversed,  
 So on that dim slope did my purpose fade 40  
 For I with thinking had dulled down the zest  
 That at the outset sprang so proud and glad.  
 "If rightly I read the trouble in thy breast,"

13-21. This first visitor of the lower world is Father Aeneas, founder of Rome.

28. "The Chosen Vessel" is St. Paul: Acts 9:15.



The shade of the Magnanimous replied,  
 "With cowardice thy spirit is oppressed, 45  
 Which oftentimes a man hath mortified,  
 So that it turns him back from noble deed,  
 As with false seeing a beast will start aside.  
 Now, that thy heart may from this fear be freed,  
 Hear why I came and what I heard, and where, 50  
 When first I felt the pity of thy need.  
 I was with those who are in suspense: and there  
 A Lady of so great beauty and blessedness,  
 I craved for her command, called me to her.  
 Her eyes so shone, the Morning Star shines less. 55  
 And she began to speak, gentle and low,  
 In the angel voice that did her soul express:  
 'O courteous Mantuan spirit, whom men fame so  
 That thy renown yet lasts, and till Time end  
 The motion of his hours, shall greater grow, 60  
 He that is my friend, but not fortune's friend,  
 Halts on the lonely moor, by feat deterred  
 So that the path he dareth not ascend.  
 Already I fear he may so sore have erred  
 That I have risen to succour him too late, 65  
 From what of him in Heaven I have heard.  
 Go now, and with thy poet's speech ornate  
 And what means else may rescue courage weak  
 Help him, and me deliver of this care's weight.  
 I am Beatrice who send thee, him to seek. 70  
 I come from that place for which now I sigh.  
 It was love moved me and made my lips to speak.  
 Often to thy praise will I testify  
 When I am come into my Lord's presence.'  
 She then was silent; and I made reply: 75  
 'O Lady, who art the only virtue whence  
 Mankind may overpass what is contained  
 Within the heaven of least circumference,  
 So welcome is the bidding thou hast deigned,  
 That were it now done, it were done too slow. 80  
 It needs but that thy wish should be explained:  
 But tell me why into this core of woe  
 Thou shun'st not to descend, turning thy face  
 From the ample air, whither thou yearn'st to go?'

52. "Who are in suspense": between Heaven and Hell, in Limbus.

53. "A Lady": Beatrice.

58. Virgil was born near Mantua.

70. Beatrice stands for Revelation, for which Dante's distorted mind must

be prepared by Reason.

77. Mankind surpasses everything contained within the sphere of the moon (everything perishable) only through divine revelation, embodied in Beatrice.

'Since thou,' she answered, 'so much of this case 85  
 Desireth knowledge, briefly shalt thou hear  
 Why I shrink not to come into this place.  
 Those things that have the power to wound and sear,  
 To them alone should due of dread be paid;  
 To the others not, they are not things to fear. 90  
 I am by God so, in his mercy, made,  
 That misery of yours touches me not  
 Nor in the scorch of this fire am I frayed.  
 A Lady in heaven is to such pity wrought 95  
 By the hard pass, whereto I bid thee haste,  
 That the strict law's remission she hath sought.  
 She called to her Lucy, and made request,  
 Saying, Now thy faithful one hath need of thee:  
 I entrust him to thee; and do thou the rest.  
 Lucy, the enemy of all cruelty, 100  
 Arose and came and stood within my gaze  
 There, where the ancient Rachel sat by me.  
 She spoke and said: Beatrice, God's true praise,  
 Why helpest thou not him, who loved thee so  
 That for thy sake he left the vile crowd's ways? 105  
 Hearest thou not the plainings of his woe?  
 Seest thou not what death would him undo  
 By that wild flood the sea may not o'ercrow?—  
 None in the world was ever swift to ensue  
 His good, or fly his hurt, as these my feet 110  
 At once, after those words were uttered few,  
 Hastened to come down from my blessed seat,  
 Confiding in thy speech, so nobly graced,  
 It honours both thee and those hearing it.  
 Having said this, her footsteps she retraced, 115  
 Turning from me her eyes that wept and shone;  
 At sight of which she made me more to haste.  
 Thus I came to thee, as she desired, and won  
 Thee from that ravening beast which would withhold  
 The short way to the Beauteous Mount begun. 120  
 What is it, then, keeps thee? Why, why haltest cold?  
 Why in thy heart nourishest fear so base?  
 Why art thou not delivered, eager, bold,

92. The happiness of the blest is not marred by compassion for the damned.

94. "A Lady": the Virgin, who is not expressly named anywhere in the *Inferno*, Hell being a place where mercy does not enter.

97. Lucy has been regarded by almost all interpreters as the emblem of Grace—probably, as her name suggests, Il-

luminating Grace.

102. Rachel symbolized the contemplative life.

108. "The wild flood" is perhaps the Acheron, the river of death which flows beneath Dante's feet, and which does not empty into the sea, but runs down through Hell.

When three such blessed Ladies of their grace  
 Care in the court of Heaven for thy plight, 125  
 And my words promise thee such good to embrace?"  
 As little flowers, that by the chill of night  
 Are closed, prick up their stems drooping and bent,  
 And to the early ray re-open white,  
 So was it with my courage fallen and spent; 130  
 And I began, as one from bondage freed,  
 So good a warmth about my body went:  
 "O most compassionate She, who helps my need!  
 O courteous thou, who to that uttered word  
 Didst listen, and to its truth so swift give heed! 135  
 Thou makest me so eager in accord  
 With what thou say'st, and quickenest so my heart,  
 That to my first resolve I am restored.  
 Now it is one will moves us both; thou art  
 Guide, master, lord!" These words to him I said, 140  
 And then, perceiving that he made to start,  
 Began the desolate, arduous path to tread.

CANTO III

[The poets pass through the door of Hell. And first, in what is Hell's ante-room, they meet a confused lamenting rabble: these are those, displeasing alike to God and to his enemies, who pursued neither good nor evil. Among them Dante recognizes him "who made the great refusal," generally identified with the Pope Celestine V, who, elected in 1294, resigned a few months later in favor of Boniface VIII, Dante's great enemy. Then they come to the shores of Acheron, the river which circles the rim of Hell before descending deeper; across it Charon ferries the lost souls, but demurs to taking Dante in his boat. A sudden earthquake throws Dante into a trance.]

THROUGH ME THE WAY IS TO THE CITY OF WOE:  
 THROUGH ME THE WAY INTO THE ETERNAL PAIN;  
 THROUGH ME THE WAY AMONG THE LOST BELOW.  
 RIGHTEOUSNESS DID MY MAKER ON HIGH CONSTRAIN.  
 ME DID DIVINE AUTHORITY UPREAR; 5  
 ME SUPREME WISDOM AND PRIMAL LOVE SUSTAIN.  
 BEFORE I WAS, NO THINGS CREATED WERE  
 SAVE THE ETERNAL, AND I ETERNAL ABIDE.  
 RELINQUISH ALL HOPE, YE WHO ENTER HERE.

5-6. Hell was made by the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or Power, Wisdom, and Love.

7-8. "In the beginning God created

the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void" (Gen. 1:1-2). At this point, apparently, Hell was created for the rebellious angels,

These words, of a dim colour, I espied 10  
 Written above the lintel of a door.  
 Whereat: "Master, the sense is hard," I cried.  
 And he, as one experienced in that lore:  
 "Here all misgiving must thy mind reject.  
 Here cowardice must die and be no more. 15  
 We are come to the place I told thee to expect,  
 Where thou shouldst see the people whom pain stings  
 And who have lost the good of the intellect."  
 His hand on mine, to uphold my falterings,  
 With looks of cheer that bade me comfort keep, 20  
 He led me on into the secret things.  
 Here lamentation, groans, and wailings deep  
 Reverberated through the starless air,  
 So that it made me at the beginning weep.  
 Uncouth tongues, horrible chatterings of despair, 25  
 Shrill and faint cries, words of grief, tones of rage,  
 And, with it all, smiting of hands, were there,  
 Making a tumult, nothing could assuage,  
 To swirl in the air that knows not day or night,  
 Like sand with the whirlwind's eddying cage. 30  
 And I, whose mind failed to discern aright,  
 Said: "Master, what is it that my ear affrays?  
 Who are these that seem so crushed beneath their plight?"  
 And he to me: "These miserable ways  
 The forlorn spirits endure of those who spent 35  
 Life without infamy and without praise.  
 They are mingled with that caitiff rabblement  
 Of the angels, who rebelled not, yet avowed  
 To God no loyalty, on themselves intent.  
 Heaven chased them forth, lest, being there, they cloud 40  
 Its beauty, and the deep Hell refuses them,  
 For, beside these, the wicked might be proud."  
 And I: "Master, what is the grief extreme  
 Which makes them so their fortune execrate?"  
 He answered: "Brief words best their case beseem. 45  
 They have no hope of death: and their estate  
 Is so abased in the blind life they own  
 That they are envious of all others' fate.  
 Report of them the world permitteth none.  
 Mercy and Justice have them in disdain. 50

who sinned almost as soon as they were made. On the Judgment Day, when all the wicked shall have been consigned to Hell, it will be sealed up, and will remain unchanged forever.

18. "The good of the intellect" is the vision of God.

42. The guilty might derive some satisfaction from comparing themselves with these.

Let us not talk of them. Look, and pass on.”  
 I, who looked, beheld a banner all a-strain,  
 Which moved, and, as it moved, so quickly spun  
 That never a respite it appeared to deign.  
 And after it I saw so many run, 55  
 I had not believed, they seemed so numberless,  
 That Death so great a legion had undone.  
 When I had marked some few among the press,  
 I chanced the shade of him to recognize  
 Who made the great refusal, in cowardice. 60  
 Forthwith I was assured, and knew mine eyes  
 Looked of a truth on the abject crew that were  
 Odious to God and to his enemies.  
 These paltry, who never were alive, were bare  
 As to the body, and all about were stung 65  
 By stings of the wasps and hornets that were there.  
 Because of these, blood, from their faces sprung,  
 Was mingled with their tears and flowed to feast  
 The loathly worms about their feet that clung.  
 Then as my peering eyes made further quest, 70  
 I saw folk on the shore of a great stream.  
 “Master,” I said, “make to me manifest  
 Who these are and what law constraineth them  
 Willingly to pass over and be gone,  
 If rightly I can discern by the faint gleam.” 75  
 And he to me: “The things shall all be known  
 To thy understanding when our steps are stayed  
 Upon the mournful shores of Acheron.”  
 Casting abashed eyes downward, and afraid  
 Lest that my words should some offence have wrought, 80  
 I ceased from speech until the stream we made.  
 And toward us lo! arriving in a boat  
 An Ancient, white with hair upon him old,  
 Crying, “Woe to you, ye spirits misbegot!  
 Hope not that heaven ye ever shall behold. 85  
 I come to carry you to yon shore, and lead  
 Into the eternal darkness, heat and cold.  
 And thou who art there, a living spirit, with speed  
 Get hence, nor with these who are dead delay”—  
 But when he noted that I took no heed, 90  
 He said: “By another ferry, another way

60. Without much doubt this is Celestine V, a pious hermit, who, after a long vacancy of the papal office, was elected Pope in July, 1294, but abdicated five months later, feeling him-

self physically and mentally unfit. Through his renunciation Boniface VIII, Dante's chief enemy, became Pope.

83. The ancient boatman is Charon.

Of entrance must thou seek to pass, not here.  
 Needs must a lighter vessel thee convey."  
 My Guide to him: "Charon, thy frowns forbear.  
 Thus is this thing willed there, where what is willed 95  
 Can be accomplished. Further questions spare."  
 Then were the shaggy cheeks from trouble stilled  
 Of that old steersman on the livid fen  
 Around whose eyes flame in a circle wheeled.  
 But those forlorn and naked spirits of men 100  
 Changed colour, chattering with their teeth, all numb,  
 Soon as the harsh words sounded in their ken.  
 They blasphemed God, blasphemed their mother's womb,  
 The human kind, the place, the time, the seed  
 Of their engendering, and their birth and doom; 105  
 Then weeping all together in their sad need  
 Betook themselves to the accursed shore  
 Which awaits each who of God takes no heed.  
 Charon, the demon, beckoning before,  
 With eyes of glowing coal, assembles all: 110  
 Whoever lags, he beats him with his oar.  
 And as the late leaves of November fall  
 To earth, one after another, ever fewer  
 Till the bough sees its spoil gone past recall.  
 So by that river Adam's seed impure 115  
 Cast themselves from the wharf, one after one,  
 At signals, as the bird goes to the lure.  
 Thus are they borne across the water dun;  
 And ere they disembark on the far strand  
 On this another gathering is begun. 120  
 "Son," said the courteous Master, "understand  
 That all those who have died in the anger of God  
 Congregate hither out of every land.  
 And they are prompt to pass over the flood,  
 For Divine Justice pricketh in them so 125  
 That fear is changed to longing in their blood.  
 By this way no good spirit is seen to go.  
 Therefore if Charon doth of thee complain,  
 What his words mean thou easily may'st know."  
 When he had ended, the whole shadowy plain 130  
 Shuddered so strongly, that the terror past  
 Still at the memory bathes me in sweat again.

94. Charon sees that Dante is destined to be carried, after death, to Purgatory in the angel's boat described in *Purg.* II, 40-51.

97-99. Charon, like most of the classical guardians retained in Dante's

Hell, becomes a demonic figure.

117. "The lure": the call by which the hunter lures it.

126. Any reality seems to them less intolerable than the apprehension.

Out of the tear-drenched earth came forth a blast  
 That made a crimson flash before me leap  
 And numbness over all my senses cast. 135  
 And I fell, like to one seized with a sleep.

CANTO IV

[When the poet awakes he is on the farther side of Acheron and on the brink of the great Abyss. He descends with Virgil to the First Circle or Limbo, where are the souls of the unbaptized and of the virtuous heathen. Virgil describes the descent of Christ into Limbo. In a part which is more luminous they are greeted by Homer and other chief poets of antiquity; it is here that Virgil's own place is. Farther on is a noble castle, where are seen heroes and heroines of old, Aristotle, "the master of them that know," and the philosophers, and other famous spirits.]

Rumble of thunder upon my brain deep-drowsed  
 So shook the sleep that at the heavy sound  
 I started, like a man by force aroused.  
 And my now rested eyes casting around  
 I rose upright, with peering gaze intent 5  
 To know the place wherein myself I found.  
 True it is, I stood on the edge of the descent  
 Where the hollow of the gulf out of despair  
 Amasses thunder of infinite lament.  
 Sombre, profound, and brimmed with vaporous air 10  
 It was, so that I, seeking to pierce through  
 To the very bottom, could see nothing there.  
 "Let us go down to the blind world below,"  
 Began the Poet, on a sudden pale,  
 "I shall be first, and thou behind me go." 15  
 And I, who had marked his colour so to quail,  
 Said: "How shall I come where thou lovest cheer  
 Who art wont over my falterings to prevail?"  
 And he to me: "The misery that is here,  
 Down among this folk, maketh my face wan 20  
 With pity, which thine eyes mistake for fear.  
 Descend we: the long way constrains us on."  
 So he entered, and he made me enter too,  
 On the first circle that the abyss doth zone.  
 Here was no sound that the ear could catch of rue, 25  
 Save only of sighs, that still as they complain  
 Make the eternal air tremble answ.  
 And this rose from the sorrow, unracked by pain,  
 That was in the great multitude below

Of children and of women and of men. 30  
 The good Master to me: "Wouldst thou not know  
 What spirits are these thou seest and hearest grieve?  
 I'd have thee learn before thou farther go,  
 These sinned not: but the merit that they achieve  
 Helps not, since baptism was not theirs, the gate 35  
 Of that faith, which was given thee to believe.  
 And if ere Christ they came, untimely in date,  
 They worshipped not with right experience;  
 And I myself am numbered in their state.  
 For such defect and for no other offence 40  
 We are lost, and only in so far amerced  
 That without hope we languish in suspense."  
 I, when I heard this, to the heart was pierced,  
 Because I knew men to much virtue bred  
 Whose spirits in that Limbo were athirst. 45  
 "Tell me, my Master, tell me, Sir!" I said,  
 Seized with a longing wholly to be assured  
 Of that faith wherein error cannot tread,  
 "Did ever any of those herein immured  
 By his own or other's merit to bliss get free?" 50  
 And he, aware what meant my covert word,  
 Answered: "I was yet new in this degree  
 When I saw one in power crowned appear  
 On whom the signs of victory were to see.  
 He took from us the shade of our first sire; 55  
 Of his son Abel, and Noah of that same seed;  
 Moses, the obedient and the law-giver;  
 The patriarch, Abraham, and the King, David;  
 Israel with his father and with his sons;  
 Rachel also, to win whom so much he did; 60  
 And many another; and made them blessed ones;  
 And I would have thee know that, before these,  
 There has been no human soul that he atones."  
 We ceased not to go on by slow degrees,

34. "These sinned not": Virgil will not have Dante suppose for a moment that his companions in Limbus have been evildoers.

46-48. As soon as Dante learns that Virgil's soul dwells in Limbus, he is eager to receive from this witness corroboration of the doctrine of the descent of Christ into Hell.

52. "I was yet new . . .": Virgil died in the year 19 B.C.

53. "I saw one . . . appear": Christ, who is never named in the *Inferno*.—"Crowned": doubtless a cruciform nimbus. After the crucifixion Christ went

down into Hell, and took from Limbus the souls of the worthy people of the Old Testament.

55. "Our first sire" is Adam.

59. "Israel": Jacob; "his father": Isaac; "his sons": his twelve children.

60. To win Rachel, Jacob served Laban twice seven years: Gen. 29:18-28.

63. Before the descent of Christ all human souls went, if bad, to Hell; if good, to Limbus. Since that time Christian souls penitent at the moment of death have gone to Purgatory.



Though he spoke still, and past the wood had come, 65  
 The wood I mean of spirits thick like trees,  
 And, since my slumber, had not advanced therefrom  
 Far, when a radiant glow beyond us shone  
 Which overcame a hemisphere of gloom.  
 A little distance from us it lay on, 70  
 Yet not so much but that I saw in part  
 What honourable folk that place had won.  
 "O thou that honourest Science and Art,  
 Who are these that have such honour and acclaim  
 That it removes them from the rest apart?" 75  
 And he to me: "The glory of the name  
 Which sounds of them above in the earthly sphere  
 Gains favour of Heaven which thus promoteth them."  
 Meanwhile a voice was sounding in my ear:  
 "Honour ye all the great Poet: his shade 80  
 That had departed, now again is here."  
 After the voice had paused and silent stayed,  
 I saw four great shades come with one accord.  
 They had an aspect neither gay nor sad.  
 The good Master began to speak his word: 85  
 "On him who bears the sword thine eyes now cast,  
 Who comes before the others, as their lord.  
 He is Homer, who all poets hath surpassed.  
 The next who comes is Horace, satirist,  
 Ovid the third, and Lucan is the last. 90  
 Because each nature doth with mine consist  
 Through that name which the one voice glorifies  
 They do me honour, and themselves not least."  
 Thus came that noble school before mine eyes  
 Assembling round the lord of loftiest style 95  
 Who over the others like an eagle flies.  
 After they had talked together a little while,  
 They turned to me and welcoming signs displayed:  
 At which salute I saw my Master smile.  
 And yet more honour unto me they paid, 100  
 For me into their band did they invite,  
 So that I a sixth amid such wisdom made.  
 Thus we went moving onwards toward the light  
 Speaking such things as here were better mute,  
 Though there to speak them was both meet and right. 105

76-78. God allows the intelligence, by the good use of which they won such renown on earth, to remain with them in the other world.

79. We are not told which of the spirits utters the greeting to Virgil.

86. "On him who bears . . .": Homer, who is depicted with a sword because he sang of arms.

Now came we to a Noble Castle's foot,  
 With lofty walls seven times engirdled round,  
 And a fair rivulet moated it about.  
 This we passed over as it had been dry ground.  
 Through seven gates entering with those sages, lo! 110  
 A meadow of fresh verdure there I found.  
 On it were people with grave eyes and slow,  
 And great authority was in their mien.  
 They spoke seldom, with mild voices and low.  
 Thus we retired on one side that demesne 115  
 Into an open, luminous, high place,  
 So that they stood where they could all be seen.  
 There on the green enamel, face to face,  
 Were shown me the great spirits, so that I  
 Exalt myself to have enjoyed such grace. 120  
 I saw Electra in a great company  
 Among whom Hector and Aencas were,  
 And armèd Caesar with the falcon eye.  
 I saw Camilla and Penthesilca there  
 Over against them, and the Latian King; 125  
 Lavinia his daughter sitting near;  
 That Brutus who drove out the proud Tarquin;  
 Lucrece, Cornelia, Julia, Marcia, four  
 Together, and by himself the Saladin.  
 When I had raised my eyes a little more, 130  
 I saw the Master of those who know: he sate  
 Amid the sons Philosophy to him bore.  
 All do him honour, all eyes on him wait.  
 Here I beheld Plato and Socrates  
 Who of all are nearest to his high estate. 135  
 Democritus, whose world blind Chance decrees;  
 Diogenes, Thalcs, Anaxagoras;  
 Zeno, Heraclitus, and Empedocles:

107. The "Noble Castle," or the Palace of Wisdom, is surrounded by seven walls representing the four moral virtues (prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice) and the three intellectual virtues (understanding, knowledge, and wisdom).

110. The gates probably symbolize the seven liberal arts of the trivium (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and the quadrivium (music, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy), which afford access to knowledge.

121. Electra, daughter of Atlas, and mother of Dardanus who was the founder of Troy.

124. Camilla: a warrior maiden (cf. *Inf.*, I, 108); Penthesilea: queen of

the Amazons.

126-28. "Lavinia": wife of Aeneas; "Brutus": Lucius Junius Brutus, implacable foe of the Tarquins; "Lucrece": Lucretia, wife of Collatinus; "Julia": daughter of Caesar, wife of Pompey; "Marcia": wife of Cato of Utica; "Cornelia": mother of the Gracchi.

129. "Saladin," the model of chivalry, was sultan of Egypt and Syria in the twelfth century. He is different in race and religion from those mentioned hitherto.

131. "The Master of those who know": Aristotle.

137. "Thales" was one of the seven wise men of Greece.

Him who was skilled the virtue of plants to class,  
 Dioscorides, I saw; and Orpheus' shade; 140  
 Tully's and Linus'; moral Seneca's;  
 Euclid, and Ptolemy, who the stars surveyed;  
 Hippocrates, Avicenna, and Galen,  
 Averroes also, who the Comment made.  
 I may not portray all in the full scene, 145  
 Being hurried on so by the long theme's care,  
 That oft the word comes short of the thing seen.  
 The band of six to two hath dwindled, where  
 By another road the sage Escort inclines  
 Out of the quiet into the trembling air. 150  
 I come to a place where there is naught that shines.

CANTO V

[The descent to the Second Circle, with which Hell proper begins. Here are the souls of carnal sinners. Minos, who presides over the entrance of Hell as Judge and assigns their places to the damned as they come in, at first refuses admittance to Dante, but is overawed by Virgil. The carnal sinners are blown about forever on stormy winds, and among them Virgil points out famous lovers. Dante wishes to speak with one pair, who are Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta, brother of the husband to whom for state reasons Francesca had been married. Hearing Francesca's story Dante is so overcome with pity that he faints.]

From the first circle I thus descended down  
 Into the second, which less space admits,  
 And so much more pain that it stings to groan.  
 There Minos, hideously grinning, sits,  
 Inspects the offences at the entering in, 5  
 Judges and, as he girds himself, commits.  
 I mean, that when the ill-born spirit comes in  
 Before his presence, it confesses all;  
 Thereon that scrutinizer of each sin  
 Sees what place Hell holds for its fittest stall; 10

140. Orpheus is considered as a philosopher.

141. "Tully," or Cicero, was one of the first philosophers that Dante studied. "Linus": an imaginary Greek poet (other texts have "Livy," the Roman historian, who also wrote philosophical works). "Seneca" the moralist was thought to be a different person from the dramatist.

142. "Ptolemy," the great geographer and astronomer of Alexandria, who lived in the second century B.C.

143. "Hippocrates, Avicenna, and Galen": three famous physicians of Greece, Turkestan, and Mysia.

144. "Averroes": a Spanish Moor of the twelfth century, was a celebrated scholar and philosopher. Having read the works of Aristotle in ancient Syriac translations, he composed three commentaries on them; one of these was followed by St. Thomas.

148. The company of six dwindles to two—Virgil and Dante.

Round him as many times his tail doth throw  
 As the degrees he wills that it should fall.  
 Always before him stand they, row on row;  
 To sentence comes each of the wretched train:  
 They tell, and hear; and straight are whirled below. 15  
 "O thou, who comest to the home of pain,"  
 Said Minos to me, when my face he spied,  
 Leaving his business of the great Arraign,  
 "Beware in whom thou, entering, dost confide.  
 Let not the broad approach thy feet ensnare." 20  
 "Why criest thou out?" answered to him my Guide:  
 "Hinder thou not his destined steps. Forbear!  
 'Thus is the thing willed there, where what is willed  
 Can be accomplished. Further question spare."  
 Now begin notes of wailing never stilled 25  
 To pierce into my ear; now am I come  
 Where thronging lamentations hold me thrilled.  
 I came into a place of all light dumb  
 That bellows like a storm in the sea-deep  
 When the thwart winds that strike it roar and hum. 30  
 The abysmal tempest that can never sleep  
 Snatches the spirits and headlong hurries them,  
 Beats and besets them with its whirling sweep.  
 When they arrive before the ruin, stream  
 The cries up; there the wail is and the moan, 35  
 'There the divine omnipotence they blaspheme.  
 I learnt that in such restless violence blown  
 This punishment the carnal sinners share  
 Whose reason by desire was overthrown.  
 And as their beating wings the starlings bear 40  
 At the cold season, in broad flocking flight,  
 So those corrupted spirits were rapt in air  
 To and fro, down, up, driven in helpless plight,  
 Comforted by no hope ever to lie  
 At rest, nor even to bear a pain more light. 45  
 And as the cranes in long line streak the sky  
 And in procession chant their mournful call,  
 So I saw come with sound of wailing by  
 The shadows fluttering in the tempest's brawl.  
 Whereat, "O Master, who are these," I said, 50  
 "On whom the black winds with their scourges fall?"

34. "The ruin": as the pit narrows progressively toward the bottom, the terraces correspondingly decrease in circumference. At one point in the round of this shelf is a break, where the rock

has fallen. In Canto XII, 31-45, we are told that when Christ descended into Hell, his coming was preceded by an earthquake, which shook down the walls of the abyss in three spots.

"The first of those concerning whom thou hast prayed  
 To know," he answered, "had dominion  
 Of many tongues, which she as empress swayed.  
 With vice of luxury was she so undone 55  
 That she made lust a law by her decree,  
 To obliterate the shame that she had won.  
 This is Semiramis: we read that she  
 Came after Ninus, and had been his bride.  
 She ruled the land the Soldan holds in fee. 60  
 That other is she who by her own hand died  
 For love's sake, to Sichaeus' urn untrue;  
 Voluptuous Cleopatra comes beside.  
 See Helen, for whose sake the long years drew  
 Ill after ill; see great Achilles there, 65  
 Who fought with love in the end, and whom love slew.  
 See Paris, Tristram! More than a thousand pair  
 He with his finger pointing at shades of fame  
 Showed me, whom love had power from life to tear.  
 After that I had heard my Teacher name 70  
 Each lady of old, with her enamoured knight,  
 My thoughts were mazed, such pity upon me came.  
 I began: "Poet, I fain would, if I might,  
 Speak with those two that hand in hand appear  
 And, as they move, seem to the wind so light." 75  
 And he to me: "When they approach more near,  
 Thou shalt see. By the love which is their guide  
 Do thou entreat them then, and they will hear."  
 Soon as the wind's whirl made them nearer glide,  
 I raised my voice up: "O tired spirits, come 80  
 And speak with us, if that be not denied."  
 Eagerly as a pair of pigeons, whom  
 Desire calls, and their will bears, as they fly  
 On wide unfaltering wings to their sweet home,  
 So swerved those spirits from out the company 85  
 Where Dido is, flying toward us underneath  
 The fell mirk; such a power had my fond cry.  
 "O kind and gracious creature that hast breath  
 And comest journeying through the black air  
 To us who made the earth bloody with our death, 90  
 Were but the world's King friend to us, a prayer

52. "The first of those . . ." is Semiramis, queen of Assyria.

61. "She who by her own hand died" is Dido. The story of her fatal love for Aeneas (and her infidelity to the memory of her dead husband Sichaeus) is told in *Aeneid*, IV.

[65. Achilles' love of Polyxena, a Trojan princess, led to his death.—J. C. McG.]

67. "Paris": son of Priam. "Tristram": the hero of the most famous medieval love romance.

Should from us both implore Him for thy peace  
 Because thou hast taken pity on our despair.  
 Whether to speak or listen better please,  
 We will speak with you, and hear and understand, 95  
 Now while the lull'd wind spares a little ease.  
 The place where I was born sits on the strand  
 Where Po descends to his peace, and with him takes  
 All the other streams that follow him down the land.  
 Love, that in gentle heart so quickly wakes, 100  
 Took him with this fair body, which from me  
 Was torn: the way of it still hurts and aches.  
 Love, that to no loved one remits his fee,  
 Took me with joy of him, so deep in-wrought,  
 Even now it hath not left me, as thou dost see. 105  
 Love led us both to one death. He that sought  
 And spilt our life—Cain's hell awaits him now."  
 These words to us upon the wind were brought.  
 When I had heard those wounded spirits, my brow  
 Sank downward, and I held it where it was, 110  
 Until the Poet spoke: "What musest thou?"  
 And when I answered, I began: "Alas!  
 How many sweet thoughts and what longings fain  
 Led them into the lamentable pass!"  
 I turned, and I began to speak again: 115  
 "Francesca, the tears come into mine eyes  
 For sorrow, and for pity of thy pain.  
 But tell me: in the time of the sweet sighs  
 How did Love vouchsafe proof of what he is,  
 And of the obscure yearnings make you wise?" 120  
 And she to me: "No grief surpasses this  
 (And this thy Teacher understands full well)—  
 In the midst of misery to remember bliss.  
 But if thou so desire to know how fell  
 The seed whose first root in our bosoms fed, 125  
 I'll tell, as one who can but weep and tell.  
 One day together, for pastime, we read  
 Of Launcelot, and how Love held him in thrall.  
 We were alone, and without any dread.

97. "The place where I was born": Ravenna, then only one mile from the sea and connected with the Po river by canals.

99. The tributaries are conceived as chasing the Po down to the sea.

102. "The way of it still . . . aches": because, murdered as she was without a chance to repent, she incurred eternal punishment.

107. "Cain's hell": the abode of

traitors to kindred, at the bottom of Hell, which awaits Francesca's husband, Gian Ciotto.

122. "Thy Teacher": Virgil, who was happy and glorious on earth, and is now condemned to eternal exile.

128. "We read of Launcelot": the French prose romance of Launcelot of the Lake, which tells of the love of the hero for Guinevere, wife of King Arthur.

Sometimes our eyes, at the word's secret call, 130  
 Met, and our cheeks a changing colour wore.  
 But it was one page only that did all.  
 When we read how that smile, so thirsted for,  
 Was kissed by such a lover, he that may  
 Never from me be separated more 135  
 All trembling kissed my mouth. The book I say  
 Was a Galahalt to us, and he beside  
 That wrote the book. We read no more that day."  
 While the one spirit spoke thus, the other cried  
 So lamentably, that the whole life fled 140  
 For pity out of me, as if I died;  
 And I fell, like a body falling dead.

CANTO X

[Passing between the flaming sepulchres and the rampart circling the city, Dante is accosted from one of the tombs by Farinata, chief of the Ghibellines of Florence, who foretells to Dante the length of his exile and explains the nature of the foreknowledge possessed by the dead. He is interrupted by *his* companion in the tomb, the father of Guido Cavalcanti (*Dante's* greatest friend, poet and son-in-law of Farinata), who not seeing Guido with Dante is anxious to know if he is alive or dead: *but* Dante does not enlighten him. In reply to a question, Farinata *says* that Frederick II, the emperor, "*stupor mundi*," whose half-Oriental court in Sicily was so brilliant in the thirteenth century, and the Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, are among the heretics entombed.]

Now journeying along a secret track  
 Between the ramparts and the sufferers  
 My Master goes, and I behind his back.  
 "O sovran Virtue, who down the circling tiers  
 Of the impious leadest me where thou dost bid, 5  
 Satisfy," I said, "the wish that in me stirs.  
 The people who in these sepulchres are hid,  
 May they be seen? None watches; none keeps guard.  
 And see! already raised is every lid."  
 And he to me: "All shall be fast and barred 10  
 When from Jehosaphat they shall hither hie  
 Each with the body he left under the sword.

137. "The book . . . was a Galahalt to us": Galahalt was the intermediary who brought Launcelot and Guinevere together; Paolo and Francesca had no such go-between—the book was their Galahalt, their guide to

love.  
 11. On the day of Judgment all souls, having recovered their bodies, will gather in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, whence, after hearing their sentence, they will return to Heaven or Hell.

This is the quarter wherein buried lie  
 Epicurus and all those his doctrine swayed,  
 Who with the body make the soul to die. 15  
 Therefore unto the question thou hast made  
 Here within soon shalt thou an answer find  
 And also to the wish thou hast not betrayed."  
 And I: "I keep not from thee, Escort kind,  
 My thought, save that, as thou too didst require 20  
 Ere now, I speak but in few words my mind."  
 "Tuscan, who goest through the city of fire  
 Alive, with comely speech upon thy tongue,  
 Halt here, if thou wilt tarry at my desire.  
 The speech thou usest manifests thee sprung 25  
 From that famed country which it may be, I tried,  
 Which I perhaps with too much trouble wrung."  
 Suddenly in my ear this sound was cried  
 From out one of those coffers; and I drew,  
 In fear, a little closer to my Guide. 30  
 And he to me spoke: "Turn! What dost thou do?  
 See Farinata, raising himself amain!  
 From the waist all of him shall rise in view."  
 My gaze from him I could not now have ta'en:  
 And he rose up to front me, face and breast, 35  
 As if of Hell he had a great disdain.  
 With prompt, inspiriting hands my Guide then prest  
 Me towards him, past the other sepulchres,  
 Counselling, "Use the words thou findest best."  
 When I was where his tomb its front uprears 40  
 He looked at me a little, and with a kind  
 Of scorn he questioned: "Who were thy forebears?"  
 I, who had it to obey him in mind,  
 Concealed nothing from him, but told all out,  
 At which his brows upward a little inclined: 45

14. Although all heresies are punished in this circle, the only one that concerns Dante is that called "Epicurean," a name bestowed, in his day, upon materialistic free-thinking which denied the immortality of the soul and regarded a comfortable life as the highest good. There is grim irony in the eternal burial of sinners who affirmed that the spirit perishes with the body. Epicurus himself, pagan though he was, is with them.

32. This famous heretic is Manente degli Uberti, called Farinata, chief of the Florentine Ghibellines, a wise and valiant leader, who died in 1264, a year before Dante's birth. In 1260 he had taken part in the battle of Montaperti,

where the Guelphs of Florence suffered a fearful defeat from the Siennese, the exiled Ghibellines, and King Manfred's Germans. After this rout the neighboring towns and barons held a council at Empoli, and all but Farinata were in favor of destroying Florence; he, however opposed the project so stoutly that it was abandoned. In 1283 the inquisitor, Salmone da Lucca, condemned him (nearly twenty years dead), his wife, his sons, and his grandsons, as heretics; his bones were cast out, his property confiscated and sold. His brave and haughty spirit is not quelled even by his fiery punishment: he appears with head and chest erect.



Then he said: "Fiercely did they use to flout  
 Me and my forefathers; and since they spurned  
 My party, twice I scattered them in rout."  
 "If they were chased, on all sides they returned,  
 Both times," I answered, "from adversities: 50  
 But yours that art have not so rightly learned."  
 Beside him then a shadow by degrees  
 Emerged, and was discovered to the chin:  
 I think he had raised himself upon his knees.  
 He looked around as if he had thought to win 55  
 Sight of some other who might be with me;  
 And when that hope was wholly quenched within,  
 Cried weeping: "If through this blind prison, free,  
 Thou goest by virtue of thy nature's height,  
 Where is my son? Why is he not here with thee?" 60  
 And I to him: "'Tis not by my own right  
 I come; he that waits yonder leads me here,  
 Of whom perhaps thy Guido had despise."  
 His words, and manner of penance, made appear  
 His name, as if I had read it on his brow, 65  
 Therefore my answer had I made thus clear.  
 Suddenly erect, he cried: "What saidest thou?  
 He *had*? Lives he not, then, in the *sweet* air?  
 Does the sun's light not strike upon him now?"  
 When of a certain pause he was aware 70  
 Ere I replied, where he had risen to stand  
 Down he fell backward, and so vanished there.  
 But, haughty of spirit, that other, at whose demand  
 I had halted, changed not aspect, nor his head  
 Moved, nor his side bent, no, nor stirred a hand. 75  
 "And if," continuing his own words, he said,  
 "To learn that art they have so little wit,  
 It tortureth me more than doth this bed.  
 But fifty times shall not afresh be lit  
 The countenance of the Lady who reigns here 80  
 Ere thou shalt know the cost of learning it.  
 And, so thou would'st return back to the dear

48-51. Farinata scattered the Guelphs in 1248 and 1260; but they returned to Florence in 1251, after the death of Frederick II, and in 1266, after the battle of Benevento; they then expelled the Ghibellines, who never "rightly learned" the art of returning.

52. The "Shadow" is Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, a noble and wealthy Florentine, the father of that Guido whom Dante calls his "first friend." This Guido Cavalcanti, a little older than

Dante, was a famous poet and student, and an ardent partisan.

61-63. Dante hastens to explain Guido's absence by the assurance that it is not his own wit, but Virgil's, which directs him, adding that Guido may not have duly esteemed the ancient sage.

79-81. "The Lady who reigns here" is Hecate, who in the sky appears as the moon. Before fifty months have passed, Dante is to learn how hard is the art of returning from exile.

Earth, tell me why in each of its decrees  
 That People against my people is so severe?"  
 Then I: "The havoc and the butcheries 85  
 That made the Arbia dyed all red to run,  
 Hath filled our temple with such litanies."  
 He sighed, shaking his head; and then spoke on:  
 "In that I was not single; nor, I swear,  
 Would I in ill cause with the rest have gone. 90  
 But single I was in that place yonder, where  
 All on the ruin of Florence had agreed.  
 I only with open face defended her."  
 "Ah, so may peace come also to thy seed,  
 Resolve me," I prayed him, "this hard knot that ties 95  
 My judgment in it, and the riddle read.  
 It seemeth, if I hear aright, your eyes  
 Perceive beforehand what Time brings with him,  
 But with the present ye use otherwise."  
 "We see like those for whom the light is dim," 100  
 He answered me, "the things that are remote;  
 So much still shines for us the Lord Supreme.  
 When they come near, or are, then avails not  
 Our understanding, and we know no more,  
 Save what is told us, of your human lot. 105  
 Easily may'st thou understand, therefore,  
 That all we have of knowledge shall be dead  
 From that time when the Future shuts its door."  
 Then pricked in conscience for my fault, I said,  
 "Will you not now acquaint that fallen one 110  
 His child is not yet from the living fled?  
 And if before to his answer I made none  
 Tell him it was my thought that was not free,  
 Being in that knot which now you have undone."  
 And now my Master was recalling me. 115  
 Therefore more earnestly the spirit I preste  
 To tell me who were those with him. And he:  
 "With more than a thousand I lie here oppress.  
 Yonder the Second Frederic is inurned,

84. In 1280, when most of the Ghibellines were allowed to come back, several of the Uberti were expressly excluded.

85-86. "The havoc and the butcheries": a reference to the battle of Montaperti, beside the Arbia river; (cf. the note at line 32).

91. "In that place yonder": at the diet of Empoli; (cf. the note at line 32).

100-108. The damned, while aware

of the past and indistinctly cognizant of the future, have no knowledge of present events on earth. Just how much the "present" embraces we are not told. After the Judgment Day, when earthly life shall cease and the foresight of lost souls shall thus come to an end, their blindness will be unrelieved.

119. The great Emperor Frederick II (1194-1250), who was long engaged in strife against the Papacy, was generally regarded as an Epicurean.

The Cardinal also: I speak not of the rest." 120  
 With that he hid himself. My steps I turned  
 Back toward the ancient Poet, pondering  
 That saying whercin some menace I discerned.  
 He moved, and as we went: "What is this thing,"  
 He said to me, "which teases so thy mind?" 125  
 I satisfied him in his questioning.  
 "Keep in thy memory what thine ears divined  
 To be against thee," warned the Sage. "Attend  
 Now," and with finger lifted he enjoined:  
 "When thou before the radiance shalt bend 130  
 Of that Lady, whose beauteous eyes see all,  
 Thou shalt learn thy life's journey unto its end."  
 Then to the left he turned his steps; the wall  
 We quitted, toward the middle advancing by  
 A path that strikes into a valley's fall, 135  
 Wherefrom the fume rose noisome even thus high.

CANTO XIII

[Crossing Phlegethon by the ford, the poets arrive in the Wood of the Suicides, who have become withered and poisonous trees among which the Harpies cry. Pier delle Vigne, who rose to great power and to be Frederick II's most intimate adviser, then suddenly fell into disgrace and committed suicide, speaks from one of the trees and tells Dante his story. Their talk is interrupted by a rushing noise made by two spirits pursued by hounds. These are Giacomo da Sant' Andrea, and Lano, a Siennese, two notorious spendthrifts. Another spirit, unnamed and unknown, tells Dante that he is of Florence, the city which had Mars for its patron and by changing him for the Baptist was thought to have incurred that god's malignity.]

Nessus had not regained the bank beyond  
 When we betook us onward from the shore  
 To a wood, wherein no path was to be found.  
 No green leaves there, but all of dim colour:  
 Smooth branches none, but wry with knot and gnarl; 5  
 No apples, but gaunt twigs with poison sour.  
 Not scrub or thicket rougher hides the snarl

120. "The Cardinal" Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, apostolic legate in Lombardy and Romagna against Frederick, in the Kingdom of Naples against Manfred, was accused of unbelief and of sympathy with the Imperial cause. Several of the early commentators report him

as saying: "If there is a soul, I have lost it for the Ghibellines."

131. "Of that Lady": Beatrice. [1. Nessus: a centaur who acts as guardian of this part of the seventh circle.—J. C. McG.]

7-9. Cecina, a town near Volterra,

'Twixt Cecina and Corneto of the beasts  
 That roaming them abhor the well-tilled marl.  
 Here have the savage Harpies made their nests 10  
 Who chased the Trojans from the Strophades  
 With baleful prophecy of coming pests.  
 Wide wings, and human necks and visages,  
 Clawed feet, and a gross belly plumed below,  
 They make lament above on the strange trees. 15  
 "Before thou further dost adventure, know  
 That thou art in the second ring, from which,"  
 The gracious Master said, "thou canst not go  
 Until the terrible great sand thou reach.  
 Thou shalt see here—therefore look well around— 20  
 Things which may take the credence from my speech."  
 Even then I heard on all sides wailing sound,  
 But of those making it saw no one nigh,  
 Wherefore I stood still, in amazement bound.  
 I think he thought that I thought that the cry 25  
 Of those so many voices came from folk  
 Who 'mid those trees hid, at our coming shy.  
 So now the Master said: "If thy hand broke  
 A shoot from any branch, the thoughts that went  
 With thy conjecture soon wouldst thou revoke." 30  
 Then I stretched forth my hand a little, and bent  
 And plucked a puny branch from a great thorn.  
 And the trunk cried out: "Why hast thou me rent?"  
 And when it grew embrowned with blood, so torn,  
 It cried again: "Why hast thou wounded me? 35  
 Wast thou without one breath of pity born?  
 Men were we, and are now turned each to a tree.  
 If souls of serpents were within us penned,  
 Still should compassion have been found in thee."  
 As a green brand that burneth at one end, 40  
 At the other drips and hisses from the wood  
 Where the escaping wind and fire contend,  
 So from that broken splinter words and blood  
 Together came: whereat, like one afraid,  
 I let the tip fall and all silent stood. 45  
 "If he, O wounded spirit," my sage then said,

and Corneto, a town close to Civitavecchia, denote the northern and southern limits of the woody, swampy district known as Maremma. In Dante's time it was covered with dense forest.

10-12. The Harpies are voracious, filthy birds with maidens' faces. On the Strophades islands, off Messenia, where

they dwelt, their foul presence repeatedly interrupted the Trojans' repast; and finally one of them uttered so threatening a prophecy that the warriors hastily departed.

19. "The terrible great sand": the third ring, consisting of a waste of sand, upon which falls a rain of fire.

"Had but been able to believe before  
 What he has seen but in my verse portrayed  
 He would not have stretched hands to hurt so sore;  
 But the incredible thing moved me to prove 50  
 'To him what now I do myself deplore.  
 But tell him who thou wast; so that thercof  
 To make amends, he may thy fame renew,  
 Where grace permits him to return, above."  
 Then the trunk: "Thy sweet words so melt me through, 55  
 My lips cannot keep silence; if to impart  
 My tale I linger, may it not burden you.  
 I am he who held both keys of Frederick's heart  
 And to their wards so softly did apply,  
 Locking and then unlocking with such art, 60  
 That few had privacy of him as I.  
 So loyal was I to the proud office,  
 That sleep and pulses both were lost thereby.  
 The whore that at the house where Caesar is  
 Will ever her adulterous glances aim, 65  
 Man's common bane, of courts the special vice,  
 The minds of all against me did inflame,  
 And these, inflamed, inflamed my lord august  
 Till my glad honours withered to sad shame.  
 My soul into disdainful temper thrust, 70  
 'Thinking by death to escape the world's disdain,  
 Made me, the just, unto myself unjust.  
 But by the fresh roots that this tree sustain  
 I swear that never troth unto my lord,  
 So worthy of honour, did I vow in vain. 75  
 If either of you be to the world restored,  
 Comfort my memory which still lies so low  
 From the stroke dealt to it by Envy's sword."  
 The poet waited; then: "Since he is slow  
 Further to speak and thou the hour has got, 80  
 Speak now and ask, if more thou wouldest know."  
 Then I to him. "Demand thou of him what  
 Thou think'st will most my mind's desire appease.  
 Such pity is in my heart, that I could not."

48. "But in my verse . . .": i.e., in the story of Polydorus in *Aeneid* III, 22-43.

58. "I am he . . .": Pier delle Vigne, who entered the court of Frederick II as a notary, and so won the confidence and affection of the sovereign that for over twenty years he was entrusted with the most important affairs of the realm. In 1248, or 1249, he was accused and convicted of treason; his

eyes were put out, and according to one account he was condemned by the Emperor to be led in derision, on an ass, from town to town. To escape dishonor, he killed himself by dashing his head against a wall. Pier, as Dante conceived him, is a magnanimous courtier, and most pathetic in his unshaken devotion to the master who wronged him.

64. "The whore" is Envy, and the house of Caesar is the Imperial court.

He resumed therefore: "So may this man ease, 85  
 By doing of what thou dost entreat, thy pain,  
 Now, O imprisoned spirit, may it please  
 To tell us how the soul becomes the grain  
 Of this gnarled wood; tell us too, if thou may'st,  
 Whether any from such limbs deliverance gain." 90  
 Then the trunk sighed out strongly until the blast  
 Of breath became voice into language knit:  
 "My answer into brief words shall be cast.  
 When the fierce spirit doth the body quit  
 From which it hath with violence broken out, 95  
 Minos consigns it to the seventh pit.  
 It falls into the wood, and there, without  
 Place chosen for it but as fortune dole,  
 Like any grain of spelt it comes to sprout,  
 Shoots up to a sapling and a forest bole; 100  
 Then the Harpies feeding on its leaves, their nest,  
 Make for it both pain and the pain's loop-hole  
 We shall go seek our spoils out, like the rest,  
 But not to be again in them arrayed;  
 He earns not that who himself hath dispossessed. 105  
 Hither shall we drag them through the grievous glade  
 And on the boughs our bodies shall be strung,  
 Each on the thorn-tree of its guilty shade."  
 We still upon the voice attentive hung,  
 Supposing it desired to tell us more, 110  
 When suddenly we heard a noise upsprung,  
 Like one who hears the coming of the boar  
 And hunt behind it on his place intrude,  
 And hears the branches crash and beasts' uproar.  
 And on the left hand lo! two spirits pursued, 115  
 Naked and torn, who fled at speed so sick  
 That all the ground with broken boughs they strewed.  
 The foremost: "O come now, Death, O come quick!"  
 And the other, finding feet too slow to escape:  
 "Thy heels made no such answer to the prick, 120  
 Lano, at Toppo jousts." And then, mayhap,  
 Because the breath was failing in him, he  
 Made of himself and of a bush one shape.  
 Behind, the wood was full, from tree to tree,  
 Of great black mastiffs, running with such gust 125  
 As greyhounds from their leashes slipping free.

102. By breaking the leaves, they perished in the battle of Pieve del  
 provide an outlet. Toppo. The speaker is Giacomo da Sant'

121. The spendthrift Lano of Siena Andrea.

Into him, as he crouched, their teeth they thrust  
 And tore him all asunder, shred by shred,  
 To carry his woeful limbs off as they lust.  
 My Guide now took me by the hand and led 130  
 My steps up to the bush, that vainly sighed  
 Lamenting through its fractures as they bled.  
 "O Giacomo da Sant' Andrea," it cried,  
 "What blame have I of thy sins, or what good  
 Get'st thou by coming in my screen to hide?" 135  
 The Master spoke, when by it now he stood:  
 "Who wast thou who through all these wounds dost blow  
 Thy sorrowful speech forth, mingled with thy blood?"  
 And he to us: "Ye spirits that witness how  
 I have been with so great ignominy torn 140  
 That these my leaves are severed from the bough,  
 Gather them close about the bush forlorn!  
 My city is that which changed its first patron  
 To choose the Baptist; for which act of scorn  
 He by his arts will ever make it groan; 145  
 And were it not that Arno doth retain  
 Upon her bridge some shadow of him in stone,  
 Those citizens who the city built again  
 On the ashes left by Attila's decree,  
 Would have expended all their toil in vain. 150  
 I made my gibbet of my own roof-tree."

CANTO XV

[Dante follows Virgil along one of the petrified high banks of the stream which crosses the sand; and as they go, they meet a troop of those who indulged unnatural lust (the "violent against nature"), and among them Dante recognizes Brunetto Latini, famous in Florence as a philosopher and man of learning and author of the *Treasure*. They greet each other affectionately; Brunetto speaks warmly of Dante's merits, and severely of the ingratitude of Florence; Dante acknowledges in tender words all he owes to Brunetto and his writings. Among Brunetto's companions is a

133. The soul in the bush, whose identity is uncertain, addresses the second of the two runners, a mad prodigal.

143. "My city": Florence, whose first patron, according to tradition, was Mars. The new patron was John the Baptist, whose image adorned the florin. The Florentines gave up martial valor for money making.

147. "Some shadow of him . . .": an old stone statue, supposed to represent the God of War, stood at the head of the Ponte Vecchio.

149. It was believed that Attila, King of the Huns, had destroyed Florence.

151. "Gibbet": place of execution. Two of the earliest commentators say that this sinner hanged himself with a girdle in his house.

bishop transferred by Boniface VIII (*servus servorum Dei* was a style used by the Popes) from Florence to Vicenza: the first reference in the poem to the great pope whom Dante detested.]

Now one of the hard banks our footing bears,  
 And the stream's smoke maketh a shadowy shield  
 So that the fire both bank and water spares.  
 As 'twixt Wissant and Bruges the Flemings build,  
 Dreading the tide that ever toward them pours, 5  
 Their rampart that compels the waves to yield,  
 And as the Paduans do by Brenta's shores,  
 Their villages and castles to make fast,  
 Ere Chiarentana feels the sun's hot force,  
 These dykes were fashioned of like mould and cast, 10  
 Albeit the master, whoever it was that wrought,  
 Had made them not so lofty nor so massed.  
 Already we were from the wood remote  
 So far, that had my eyes turned back thereto  
 They could not have had power the place to note, 15  
 When up to us now a band of spirits drew,  
 Coming beside the bank; and scrutiny  
 Each made of us, as men are wont to do  
 At dusk, when a new moon is in the sky;  
 And at us, puckering their brows, they pried 20  
 Like an old tailor at his needle's eye.  
 As thus by all that company we were eyed,  
 One of them recognized me, and by the skirt  
 Caught hold of me, and "O what marvel!" cried.  
 Soon as he touched me, I could no more avert 25  
 Mine eyes, but on his visage scorched and sore  
 Fixt them, until beneath the mask of hurt  
 Did the remembered lincaments appear.  
 And to his face my hand inclining down,  
 I answered, "Ser Brunetto, are you here?" 30  
 And he: "May it not displease thee, O my son,  
 If Brunetto Latini turn with thee  
 A little back, and let his troop go on."  
 I said: "That same thing most contenteth me.  
 And if that I sit with you, you prefer, 35  
 So will I do, if he I am with agree."  
 "O my son," said he, "of this herd, whoc'er  
 One instant stops, an hundred years must lie  
 Helpless against the fire a hand to stir;

7. The "Brenta" is a stream in north-eastern Italy.

9. "Chiarentana": a mountainous region north of the Brenta. Its melting snows swell the river.



Therefore go on, while at thy skirts go I 40  
 And then rejoin my comrades in lament,  
 Who as they go, their loss eternal sigh."  
 I dared not from the road make the descent  
 To go level with him; but bowed my head  
 Like one who walketh inly reverent. 45  
 He began now: "What fate or fortune led  
 Thee down into this place, ere thy last day?  
 Who is it that thy steps hath piloted?"  
 "Above there in the clear world on my way,"  
 I answered him, "lost in a vale of gloom, 50  
 Before my age was full, I went astray.  
 But yester morn I turned my back therefrom.  
 As I re-entered it, he came from far,  
 And by this same path he shall guide me home."  
 And he to me: "If thou follow thy star, 55  
 Thou'lt fail not glorious harbour at the end,  
 If in the beautiful life I did not err.  
 And had Fate chosen my own years to extend,  
 Seeing Heaven did on thee so benignly look,  
 I had been with thee to hearten and befriend. 60  
 But that ungrateful, that malignant folk :  
 Who came of old down from Fiesole, :  
 And still smack of the mountain and the rock,  
 Will for thy good deeds turn thine enemy.  
 And there is cause; among the acid slopes 65  
 Ill fits that sweet figs fruit upon the tree.  
 Old fame on earth proclaims them envious,  
 Arrogant, blind of eye and greedy of throat.  
 Wipe thyself clean of all such ways as these.  
 Thy fortune keeps thee for such honoured note 70  
 That either side will hunger in pursuit  
 Of thee; but far shall grass be from the goat.  
 Let them their own selves tear in pieces, brute  
 Beasts of Fiesole, and not impede  
 If 'mid their rankness any scion shoot 75  
 In which reviveth still the sacred seed  
 Of those true Romans who incorrupt remained  
 When grew that nest of malice and of greed."  
 "Could all of my desire have been attained,"

53. "He came . . .": Dante avoids mentioning Virgil by name in Hell.

61. "That malignant folk": the Florentines.

62. "Fiesole" is at the top of a steep hill near Florence. Catiline, driven from Rome, took refuge there with his

followers. When the place was finally taken, tradition has it that the surviving inhabitants, combining with a Roman colony, founded Florence.

77-78. Dante believed that his own family belonged to the old Roman stock of Florence.

I answered him, "not yet from the estate 80  
 Of our humanity had you been banned.  
 Still in my heart stays, memory's dear inmate,  
 The fatherly kind image, paining now,  
 Of you, when in the world, early and late,  
 You taught me how man may eternal grow. 85  
 And whilst I breathe the air, it is most right  
 My grateful tongue declare all that I owe.  
 What of my course you tell that I do write  
 And keep for a Lady with another text  
 For her wise comment, if I of her win sight. 90  
 Of this much would I have you perplexed.  
 I am prepared, so conscience not upbraid,  
 For Fortune, whatsoe'er she purpose next.  
 Not new to these ears is such boding made.  
 Therefore let Fortune turn her wheel to accord 95  
 With her own pleasure, and the boor his spade."  
 Then over his right shoulder turned my Lord  
 Backward and looked at me, and spoke anon:  
 "He listens well who noteth well the word."  
 None the less I continue speaking on 100  
 With Sir Brunetto, and I ask him who  
 Of his companions highest note have won.  
 And he to me: "Of some 'tis well to know:  
 But of the rest 'twere better naught be said;  
 So much talk, this short time, we must forgo. 105  
 Know then in brief, all these were scholars bred  
 And clerks, and upon earth great fame they knew,  
 And all by the same soilure forfeited.  
 Priscian goeth among that sorry crew  
 And Francesco d'Accorso; and didst thou crave 110  
 Such scurf, thou mightest have seen and spoken to  
 Him who from Arno to Bacchiglion's wave  
 By the servant of God's servants was transferred,  
 And there his sinfully spent nerves outgave.  
 I would say more, but must not be deferred 115  
 My going, and speech must end now; for I see  
 Smoke of new dust there from the sand upstirred.  
 People are coming with whom I may not be.  
 But let my *Treasure* (and I ask no more),

95-96. Let fate and men pursue their thoughtless course: this sounds like a proverbial phrase.

97. "My Lord": Virgil.

109-110. "Priscian": the great Latin grammarian of the sixth century. "Francesco d'Accorso": a renowned

jurist, lived in Bologna and in England, in the thirteenth century.

112. He "who from Arno" is, is Andrea di Mozzi, a bishop removed in 1295 by Boniface VIII.

119. My "Treasure": Brunetto Latini's main work.

Wherein I live still, be commended thee."  
 He turned, and seemed like, in the field before  
 Verona, one of those who run the race  
 For the green cloth; so seemed he running, nor  
 Seemed in the loser's but the winner's place.

120

CANTO XXVI

[Dante addresses his native city in shame. He had recognized five Florentines of noble family among the Thieves. Virgil leads him up the rugged path to the next chasm, the eighth, where are the Evil Counsellors, whose theft is spiritual, each imprisoned in a burning flame. One of the flames has a double tip and conceals the spirits of Ulysses and Diomed. Virgil asks one of them to speak; and Ulysses tells of his last voyage into the unknown ocean below the Equator and shipwreck near the Mount of Purgatory. This story does not agree with the *Odyssey* and is thought to be Dante's invention. (It suggested Tennyson's poem.)]

Florence, exult that thou hast grown so great  
 That thy wings beat the seas and lands around  
 And wide thy name is spread within Hell's Gate!  
 Among the Thieves five of such note I found  
 Thy citizens, whence shame comes to my check,  
 Nor to thine honour doth it much redound.  
 But if the truth in dream of morning speak,  
 Thou shalt in short time feel what upon thee  
 Prato, and others also, thirst to wreak.  
 If it were now, not too soon would it be!  
 Since come it must, I would that come it were,  
 For, with each year, heavier it is for me.  
 Thence we departed; and by that same stair  
 Which served for our descent, of ledges frayed,  
 My Guide climbed back, and me with him up-bare.  
 And as our solitary way we made  
 Among the juts and splinters of the scarp,  
 The foot sped not without the hand to aid.  
 Then did I grieve, and grief returneth sharp,  
 Seeing what I saw in memory, and I rein  
 More than of wont my genius, lest it warp  
 And run where Virtue is not to constrain,

5

10

15

20

123. In the annual games held in Verona in the thirteenth century the first prize in the foot-race was a green cloth.

7. It was a popular belief that

dreams occurring just before dawn would come true.

9. "Prato" is a little town near Florence: thou shalt feel the grief which even thy nearest neighbors wish thee.

So that if good star or aught better still  
 Enrich me, I may not grudge myself the gain.  
 Like fire-flies that the peasant on the hill, 25  
 Reposing in that season, when he who shines  
 To light our world his face doth least conceal,  
 At that hour when the fly to gnat resigns,  
 Sees glimmering down along the valley broad,  
 There where, perhaps, he ploughs or tends the vines, 30  
 So numerous the flames in the Eighth Chasm glowed  
 Down all its depth, laid open to mine eyes  
 Soon as I came to where the bottom showed.  
 As he who avenged him by the bears saw rise  
 The fiery chariot that Elijah bore 35  
 With horses mounting straight into the skies,  
 For follow it with his eyes he could not more  
 Than to behold only the flame serene  
 Like to a little cloud above him soar;  
 Thus moved along the throat of that ravine 40  
 Each flame, for what it stole it doth not show,  
 And within each a sinner is, unseen.  
 I stood upon the bridge, rising tip-toe.  
 Had I not caught a rock and on it leant  
 I should have fallen, without thrust or blow. 45  
 The Guide, who saw me gazing thus attent,  
 Said: "Within these fires are the spirits confined,  
 Burned by the shroud within which they are pent."  
 "Master," I answered, "this had I divined  
 Myself already, which thou makest plain. 50  
 And ev'n now was the question in my mind:  
 Who is in that fire which comes so torn in twain  
 As if it rose above the pyre that bare  
 Eteocles beside his brother slain?"  
 He answered me: "Ulysses suffers there 55  
 And Diomed; as they braved Heaven's wrath before  
 Together, now its vengeance must they share.  
 Within their flame tormented, they deplore  
 The Horse and its deceiving ambushade

23. "Aught better" is divine grace.

25. In this pretty simile of the fire-flies, the season which is indicated (lines 26-27) is the summer solstice, the hour (line 28) is dusk.

34. "He who . . .": Elisha (2 Kings 2:23-24).

54. Eteocles and Polynices, the rival sons of Oedipus, contending for the possession of Thebes, killed each other. When their bodies were burned on the same pyre, the flames divided into two

peaks.

55-60. Ulysses and Diomed, two of the leading heroes of the Trojan war, go together in their punishment, as they went together to expose themselves to divine wrath.—"The Horse . . .": the wooden horse full of Greek warriors, which the Trojans were persuaded to take into the city. By this means Troy was destroyed, and Aeneas and his followers, who afterwards founded the Roman stock, had to flee.

Which opened for Rome's gentle seed the door. 60  
 And they lament the guile, whereby the shade  
 Of Deidamia for Achilles rucs;  
 And for Palladium stolen are they paid."  
 "If they within those sparks a voice can use,  
 Master," I said, "I pray thee of thy grace— 65  
 A prayer that strongly as a thousand sucs—  
 Forbid me not to tarry in this place  
 Until the hornéd flame blow hitherward:  
 See, toward it how the longing bends my face."  
 And he to me: "The thing thou hast implored 70  
 Deserveth praise: and for that cause thy need  
 Is answered: yet refrain thy tongue from word.  
 Leave me to speak, for well thy wish I read.  
 But they, since they were Grecks, might turn aside,  
 It may be, and thy voice disdain to heed." 75  
 After the fire had come, where to my Guide  
 Time and the place seemed fit, I heard him frame  
 His speech upon this manner, as he cried:  
 "O ye who are two within a single flame,  
 If, while I lived, merit of you I won, 80  
 If merit, much or little, had my name,  
 When the great verse I made beneath the sun,  
 Move not, but let the one of you be heard  
 Tell where he went to perish, being undone."  
 The greater horn of the ancient flame was stirred 85  
 To shudder and make a murmur, like a fire  
 When in the wind it struggles and is blurred,  
 Then tossed upon a flickering crest yet higher,  
 As it had been a tongue that spoke, it cast  
 A voice forth from the strength of its desire, 90  
 Saying: "When I from Circe broke at last,  
 Who more than a year by Gacta (before  
 Aencas had so named it) held me fast,  
 Not sweet son, nor revered old father, nor  
 The long-due love which was to have made glad 95  
 Penelope for all the pain she bore,  
 Could conquer the inward hunger that I had

62. Thetis, to save her son Achilles from the war, disguised him as a girl and entrusted him to King Lycomedes of Scyros; there he won the love of the king's daughter Deidamia, and promised that he would be true to her. Discovered by Ulysses and Diomed, he departed with them to the war, and forgot his promise.

63. Ulysses and Diomed stole the Palladium, an image of Pallas, on

which the fate of Troy depended.

80. Virgil assumes that he has immortalized Ulysses and Diomed in his *Aeneid*.

91. Circe, daughter of the sun, was a sorceress who turned men into beasts. Ulysses visited her and compelled her to restore her victims to human form.

92. Aeneas named the place in memory of his nurse Caieta, who had died there.

To master earth's experience, and to attain  
 Knowledge of man's mind, both the good and bad.  
 But I put out on the deep, open main 100  
 With one ship only, and with that little band  
 Which chose not to desert me; far as Spain,  
 Far as Morocco, either shore I scanned.  
 Sardinia's isle I coasted, steering true,  
 And the isles of which that water bathes the strand. 105  
 I and my crew were old and stiff of thew  
 When, at the narrow strait, we could discern  
 The boundaries that Hercules set far in view  
 That none should dare beyond, or further learn.  
 Already I had Sevilla on the right, 110  
 And on the larboard Ceuta lay astern.  
 'Brothers,' I said, 'who manfully, despite  
 Ten thousand perils, have attained the West,  
 In the brief vigil that remains of light  
 To feel in, stoop not to renounce the quest 115  
 Of what may in the sun's path be essayed,  
 The world that never mankind hath possessed.  
 Think on the seed ye spring from! Ye were made  
 Not to live life of brute beasts of the field  
 But follow virtue and knowledge unafraid. 120  
 With such few words their spirit so I steel'd,  
 That I thereafter scarce could have contained  
 My comrades from the voyage, had I willed.  
 And, our poop turned to where the Morning reigned,  
 We made, for the mad flight, wings of our oars, 125  
 And on the left continually we gained.  
 By now the Night beheld within her course  
 All stars of the other pole, and ours so low,  
 It was not lifted from the ocean-floors.  
 Five times the light had been rekindled slow 130  
 Beneath the moon, and quenched as oft, since we  
 Broached the high venture we were plighted to,  
 When there arose a mountain in the sea,  
 Dimm'd by the distance: loftier than aught  
 That ever I beheld, it seemed to be. 135  
 Then we rejoiced; but soon to grief were brought.

108. "The boundaries": the pillars of Hercules, on either side of the Strait of Gibraltar.

124. They turn their stern to the morning and sail forth, constantly gaining on the left; that is, their course is not due west, but southwest.

128. "Ours": our northern pole; when they pass the equator, the North Star sinks below the sea level.

130. "Five times . . .": they have sailed five months.

133. Doubtless the mountain of Pur-gatory, directly opposite Jerusalem, in the middle of the Hemisphere of Water.

A storm came out of the strange land, and found  
 The ship, and violently the forepart caught.  
 Three times it made her to spin round and round  
 With all the waves; and, as Another chose, 140  
 The fourth time, heaved the poop up, the prow drowned,  
 Till over us we heard the waters close."

CANTO XXVII

[Another flame appears, and a voice from it asks for news of Romagna, and Dante tells of its condition. The name of this spirit is not given, but he is Guido da Montefeltro, a distinguished Ghibelline. He tells how he was persuaded by Pope Boniface VIII to give fraudulent counsel. The poets then pass to the next chasm.]

Quieted now, the flame rose all upright,  
 Having no more to speak, and with the accord  
 Of the sweet poet was moving from our sight  
 When another, that came on behind it, toward  
 Its summit caused us to direct our eyes 5  
 Because of the wild sound that from it roared.  
 As the Sicilian bull, that with the cries  
 Of him (and it was justice) bellowed first  
 Who with his file had shaped it in that guise,  
 Kept bellowing as the sufferer's voice outburst, 10  
 So that although it was of brass compact  
 The metal seemed with agony transpierced;  
 Thus from the fire at first, since a way lacked  
 For issue, the despairing words up-cast  
 Were changed into its language by the tract; 15  
 But after they had found their road at last  
 Up to the tip, imparting to the flame  
 The trembling the tongue gave them as they passed,  
 We heard it say: "O thou at whom I aim  
 My voice, who used'st speech of Lombardy 20  
 Saying, 'Now go, no more of thee I claim,'  
 Though over-tardy I have come, maybe,  
 Speak with me, so it not irk thee and if thou wilt:  
 Thou seest, although I burn, it irks not me.  
 If into this blind world thou art but now spilt 25  
 From that sweet Latin country whence I bore  
 Hither the entire burden of my guilt,  
 Tell me if Romagna now have peace or war;

7. The brazen Sicilian bull, made for Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum, was so constructed that the shrieks of victims burned within it sounded like the bellowing of a real beast. Phalaris tried

it first on its maker, Perillus.

28. Romagna is the region lying between the Po, the Apennines, the Adriatic, and the Reno.

For I was of the mountains there, between  
 Urbino and where the springs of Tiber pour." 30  
 Still all attentive downward did I lean,  
 When soft my Leader touched me on the side  
 Saying, "Speak thou; a Latin this has been."  
 To him without ado then I replied,  
 Having no need my answer to prepare: 35  
 "O spirit that there enshrouded dost abide,  
 Not now is thy Romagna, and was not e'er,  
 Without war in her tyrants' hearts; but blood  
 Of battle in open field I left not there.  
 Ravenna stands as long years it hath stood, 40  
 Where covering Cervia with vans outspread  
 Polenta's Eagle over it doth brood.  
 The city that of the French made slaughter red  
 And ere that proved its fortitude so long,  
 Under the Green Paws hides once more its head. 45  
 The old mastiff of Verrucchio and the young,  
 Who brought Montagna into such evil state,  
 After their wont still tear where they have clung.  
 Guideth Lamone's and Santerno's fate  
 The young Lion of the White lair, changing side 50  
 Winter and summer, with the seasons' date.  
 And that city the Savio flows beside,  
 Even as it lies between the hill and plain,  
 Tyranny and freedom do its life divide.  
 Now who thou art declare to us, nor refrain 55  
 In hardness more than others have been hard,  
 So may thy name on earth its front maintain."  
 When for awhile the flame had shrilled and roared  
 After its manner, the sharp tip it swayed  
 This way and that, and then his breath outpoured: 60  
 "If I believed that my reply were made  
 To one who could revisit earth, this flame  
 Would be at rest, and its commotion laid.  
 But seeing that alive none ever came  
 Back from this pit, if it be truth I hear, 65

30. The county of Montefeltro lies between Urbino and the Tuscan Apennines.

41-42. Cervia, a town near Ravenna, was subject to the Polenta family, whose arms contained an eagle.

43. "The city": Forlì, whose inhabitants, in 1282, had defeated their French besiegers with great slaughter. In 1300 it was ruled by the Ordelaffi, who had in their arms a lion with green claws.

46-47. The "old mastiff" is Malatesta da Verrucchio, lord of Rimini; the "young mastiff" is his son Malatestino. In 1296 they defeated the Ghibelline forces of Rimini, and murdered their leader Montagna.

49. Faenza, on the Lamone, and Imola, near the Santerno, were ruled by Maghinardo da Susinana, whose banner bore a blue lion on a white field.

52. "That city" is Cesena.



I answer without dread of injured fame.  
 I was a man of arms, then Cordelier,  
 Hoping, so girdled, in my ways to amend;  
 And certainly that hope had come entire  
 But for the Great Priest, whom may ill attend, 70  
 Who brought me back into my sins of old,  
 And how and why I'll have thee comprehend.  
 Whilst I was bones and pulp and in the mould  
 My mother made for me, my deeds were those  
 Of the sly fox, not of the lion bold. 75  
 All cunning stratagems and words that gloze  
 I knew, and mastered the uses of deceit  
 So that to earth's end rumor of it goes.  
 When at the age which counselleth retreat  
 I saw me arrived, the which should all constrain 80  
 To strike the sail, and gather in the sheet,  
 That which before had pleased me now was pain,  
 And from the world a penitent I withdrew.  
 Ah, miserable! it should have been my gain.  
 The prince of the new Pharisees, who knew 85  
 How to wage war beside the Lateran  
 And not with Saracen and not with Jew—  
 (For each one of his focs was Christian,  
 And none to conquer Acre's fort had gone  
 Nor trafficked in the land of the Soldan) 90  
 Regarding neither the office of his throne  
 Nor the Holy Orders, nor in me that cord  
 Which used to make lean those that girt it on,  
 As on Soracte Constantine implored  
 Sylvester's art his leprosy to heal— 95  
 So for my mastery me this man conjured  
 To cure his prideful fever, and made appeal  
 To me for counsel: and I kept me mute,  
 For like a drunkard seemed his words to reel.  
 And then he spoke: 'Let not thy heart misdoubt; 100  
 Here I absolve thee. Now instruct me how I  
 May Palestrina from the earth uproot.  
 Heaven, as thou knowest, I have authority  
 To unlock the lock: for double is the key,

67. "Cordelier": a Franciscan friar.  
 70. "The Great Priest" is Pope Boniface VIII.

85. Boniface VIII was waging war at home, close to his Lateran palace, with the Colonna family, who had entrenched themselves in their stronghold of Palestrina. This city was surrendered to Boniface on false promises, and then

demolished.

89. No one of them had been a renegade to help the Saracens take Acre in 1291.

97. Pope Sylvester I, who had taken refuge on Mt. Soracte, near Rome, was sought out, according to the legend, to cure the Emperor Constantine of leprosy; this he did by baptism.

Which he who came before me prized not high.' 105  
 Then that strong argument enforcing me  
 To think silence the worst counsel of all,  
 I said, 'Since, Father, I am cleansed by thee  
 Of that guilt into which I now must fall,  
 Wouldst thou in the high seat hold triumphant head, 110  
 Make large thy promise, its fulfilment small.'  
 Francis came afterwards, when I was dead,  
 To take me; and one of the Black Cherubim  
 Denied him: 'Thou wilt do me wrong,' he said.  
 'Among my minions must I carry him 115  
 Because he gave the treacherous advice,  
 Since when by the hair I have held him, every limb.  
 For the unrepentant unabsolvèd dies,  
 Nor can a soul repent and will the sin  
 At once, in this a contradiction lies.' 120  
 O wretched me! How startled was I then,  
 When seizing me he said: 'Thou thoughtest not,  
 May be, that I had a logician been!'  
 To Minos then he bore me; he straightway got  
 His tail eight times around his horny side 125  
 And biting on it then with anger hot,  
 'To the thievish fire this sinner goes,' he cried.  
 Therefore I, where thou seest me, am borne  
 Lost in this swathing, and in grief abide."  
 When he had ended thus his words forlorn, 130  
 The flame departed sorrowing, all frayed  
 With struggle and tossing upward its sharp horn.  
 I and my Guide with me passed on, and made  
 Along the cliff to the other arch up-built  
 Over the fosse in which their fee is paid 135  
 To those who, sowing discord, harvest guilt.

## CANTO XXXII

[The Ninth Circle is formed by the frozen waters of Cocytus, into which all the rivers of Hell descend. It is divided into four concentric rings. The outermost is called *Caïna*, from Cain who killed his brother, and contains those who have done violence to their own kin. The second is called *Antenora*, from Antenor the Trojan, and contains those who, like him, betrayed their country.

105, "He who came before me . . .":  
 Celestine V, who renounced the papacy.  
 111-120. St. Francis of Assisi came  
 to claim the departing spirit; but

though absolved by a Pope, Guido had  
 not genuinely repented of his last mis-  
 deed, and therefore the absolution was  
 invalid.

The other two are called Ptolomea and Giudecca. In *Caïna* Dante finds the two sons of Alberto degli Alberti frozen into the ice: they had killed each other. Dante learns who they are from Camicion de' Pazzi. Moving into *Antenora*—for there is no material division between the rings of this circle—he strikes his foot against the head of Bocca degli Abbati, the traitor on the Florentine side at the battle of Montaperti; Bocca refuses to tell his name, though Dante discovers it, but is eager to tell of other traitors. Passing on, Dante sees two sinners frozen in one hole, one of whom gnaws the head of the other.]

If I had rhymes to rasp and words to grate  
 Congenial with the grimness of the pit  
 Whereon all the other scarps collect their weight,  
 I should crush out the juice of my conceit  
 More fully; but not having them, I fall 5  
 Into fear, being constrained to tell of it.  
 For to portray the bottom and core of all  
 The world is no feat to essay in sport,  
 No, nor for tongues that *Mamma, Pappa*, call.  
 But may those Ladies now my verse support 10  
 Through whom Thebes rose up to Amphiôn's note  
 So that my words may not the truth distort.  
 O rabble above all others misbegot,  
 Who are in the place to speak of which is hard,  
 Better on earth ye were born sheep or goat! 15  
 When we were down within the well's dark ward  
 Under the Giant's feet, and yet more low,  
 And still on the high wall was my regard,  
 I heard a voice say: "Look how thou dost go!  
 Beware that thy feet spurn not as they pass 20  
 The heads of thy sad brethren worn with woe."  
 Whereat I turned, and saw a great morass  
 Before me and beneath, whose icy flood  
 Had likeness not of water but of glass.  
 Never in Austria did Danube broad 25  
 Darken his wintry stream with veil so thick,  
 Nor Don afar beneath the freezing cloud,  
 As there was here: for even were Tambernic  
 Or Pietrapana down upon it shot,  
 It would not, ev'n at the edge, have given a creak. 30

9. Not fit for a childish tongue.

10. "Ladies": the Muses, thanks to whom Amphiôn's lyre charmed the rocks to move and form the walls of Thebes.

21. The "sad brethren" who thus ad-

dress Dante from the ice, are the counts of Mangona.

28-29. "Tambernic" is an unidentified mountain. "Pietrapana" is a mountain in the Apennines.

Like, when the peasant-woman dreams of what  
 She'll glean afield, the frogs that, every one  
 With muzzle out of water, croaking squat,  
 So livid, up to where men's shame is shown,  
 The desolate shades were in the ice confined, 35  
 Setting their teeth to the stork's chattering tune.  
 Each of them downward held his face inclined.  
 And by the mouth their bitter cold was seen  
 And by the eyes the torment of their mind.  
 When I had looked awhile upon that scene, 40  
 I turned, and at my feet saw two close-prest  
 So that their hair commingled in between.  
 "Tell me, ye who are crushed so, breast to breast,"  
 Said I, "who are ye?" And back their necks they bent,  
 And when to me their gaze they had addressed, 45  
 Their eyes, before moist but with tears unspent,  
 Brimmed at the lids, and what between them welled  
 Gushed down over the lids and what forthwelled  
 Log to log clamping-iron never held  
 So firmly; wherefore with their heads they sparred, 50  
 Butting like goats, such rage within them swelled.  
 And one who had both ears by cold quite marred,  
 With brow still bent, said: "Why with scrutiny  
 As in a glass look'st thou on us so hard?  
 If thou desire to learn who these two be, 55  
 The vale wherefrom Bisenzio's waters flow  
 They and their father Albert held in fee.  
 They issued from one body: Caina through  
 Thou well may'st search and never find a shade  
 More worthy to be stuck in the icy gluc; 60  
 Not him whose breast and shadow by the blade  
 In Arthur's hand were cloven at one blow;  
 Not Focaccia; nor him who with his head  
 So blacks my sight, it can no further go,  
 And Sassol Mascheroni had for name: 65  
 If thou be Tuscan, him wilt thou well know.  
 And lest thou tease me further speech to frame,  
 Know that Camicion de' Pazzi I was,

56. The "Bisenzio" is a little stream that runs near Prato.

57. Alberto, count of Mangona. His sons quarrelled over their inheritance and killed each other.

61. "Him whose breast . . .": Mordred, the treacherous nephew of King Arthur, who was pierced by such a blow from him that, when the weapon was pulled out, a ray of sunlight traversed his body.

63. "Focaccia" de' Cancellieri, of Pistoia, killed one of his relatives in a tailor's shop.

65. "Sassol Mascheroni" murdered a nephew to secure his inheritance.

68-69. Of Camicion de' Pazzi nothing certain is known. He is said to have treacherously slain a kinsman named Ubertino. "Carlino" de' Pazzi is still alive; he was to commit his great crime in 1302, when he was bribed to

And wait for Carlin to excuse my shame."  
 Then saw I countless visages, alas! 70  
 Purpled with cold, that made me shudder, and still  
 The shudder comes when frozen pools I pass.  
 As we were going toward the middle still  
 Where the universe concentrates all its weight  
 And I was trembling in the eternal chill, 75  
 Whether it was by will or chance or fate  
 I know not, but as 'mid the heads I went  
 Hard against one my stumbling foot I set.  
 "Why dost thou trample me?" it made lament;  
 "If thou com'st not the vengeance to increase 80  
 For Montaperti, why, then, me torment?"  
 And I: "Wait, Master, here, that he may ease  
 My mind of a certain doubt that I have had.  
 Then will I haste as much as thou dost please."  
 The Leader stood: then spoke I to that shade 85  
 Who still kept bitterly blaspheming there,  
 "What art thou, who dost others so upbraid?"  
 "Who art thou, who dost through Antenora dare  
 Come smiting others," said he, "on the cheek?  
 Wert thou alive, it were too much to bear." 90  
 "Alive I am," replied I, "and if thou seek  
 I'ame, it may profit that thy name be writ  
 Among the other names whereof I speak."  
 And he: "My craving is quite opposite.  
 Take thyself off; vex me no more; be sped. 95  
 To flatter on this slope thou hast small wit."  
 Then seizing him by the hair behind, I said:  
 "Needs must I have thy name from thine own lip  
 Or not a hair remains upon thy head."  
 Whence he to me: "Though all my scalp thou strip, 100  
 I'll tell not who I am; I will resist,  
 Though over me a thousand times thou trip."  
 Already I had his hair twined in my fist,  
 And more than one tuft had I plucked away,  
 The while he howled, nor would his face up-twist, 105  
 When another cried: "What ails thee, Bocca, say!  
 Is it not enough to chatter with thy jaws?  
 Must thou howl too? What fiend has thee for prey?"  
 "Speak not now," said I, "there's no longer cause;  
 For to thy shame, accursed traitor thou! 110

surrender to the Florentine Blacks the castle of Pietravigne.

81. The mention of Montaperti arouses Dante's suspicions. This was

the disastrous defeat of the Florentine Guelphs in 1260 by the Sienese Ghibellines. The rout was attributed to the traitor Bocca degli Abati (see line 106).

I'll tell the truth of what thy treachery was."  
 "Away!" he answered. "Blab, I care not how.  
 But if thou get hence, let the tale be told  
 Of him who had his tongue so prompt but now.  
 Here in his place he rues the Frenchman's gold. 115  
 Thou canst say: 'Him of Duera I espied,  
 There where the sinners ache amid the cold.'  
 Shouldst thou be questioned who was there beside,  
 Thou hast at hand the Beccheria here  
 Who, with his gorget slit by Florence, died. 120  
 Farther on, I think, is Gianni de' Soldanier,  
 Gancelon, and Tebaldello, who made the trap,  
 Opening Faenza when all slept in her."  
 We had left him now behind, when in one gap  
 Frozen together two so close I saw 125  
 That the one head to the other was a cap.  
 And as upon a crust a famished jaw,  
 So the uppermost, there where the brain joins with  
 The nape, did eagerly the other gnaw.  
 Not otherwise did Tydeus' frenzied teeth 130  
 Upon the brows of Menalippus feed  
 Than he upon the skull and parts beneath.  
 "O thou who showest by such bestial deed  
 Thy hatred upon him thou dost devour,  
 Tell me why," said I,—"but be this agreed 135  
 That, if with reason thou complain so sore,  
 I, knowing who ye are and what his crime,  
 May yet on earth above repay thy score,  
 So my tongue be not withered ere the time."

## CANTO XXXIII

[The two sinners are Count Ugolino and the Archbishop of Pisa, both traitors. Ugolino, having the chief power in Pisa, where he was head of the Guelfs, allied himself with the Archbishop, the leader of the Ghibellines, in order to get rid of his nephew; then the Archbishop turned against him and had him and his four sons imprisoned in a tower and starved to death, as Ugolino now describes

116. Buoso da Duera of Cremona, being bribed by the French, allowed, in 1265, the army of Charles of Anjou, to pass by the Ghibelline forces.

119. Tesaurus dei Beccheria of Pavia was beheaded by the Guelfs of Florence for conducting secret negotiations with the Ghibelline exiles.

121. "Gianni de' Soldanier," in 1266, headed a mob against his Ghibelline associates.

122. "Gancelon" is the famous traitor to Charlemagne, at Roncesvalles. The Ghibelline Tebaldello surrendered to the Bolognese Guelfs his own city of Faenza.

130. Tydeus, one of the seven kings who attacked Thebes, was mortally wounded by Menalippus, whom he succeeded in killing. Before dying, he called for the head of his opponent, and gnawed it fiercely.

to Dante. After an outburst of bitter indignation against Pisa, Dante passes on with Virgil to the third ring, the Ptolomea, so called from Ptolemy, whose treacherous act of murder is told in the Book of Maccabees. Here they find Friar Alberic, who invited his brother and nephew to a feast and then had them killed, the signal to the murderers being "Bring in the fruit." He explains the peculiar privilege of Ptolomea, that sometimes a man is brought there still alive, leaving a demon in his body on earth. This is the case with him and with Branca d'Oria, who had his father-in-law, Michel Zanche murdered.]

That sinner raised up from the brute repast  
 His mouth, wiping it on the hairs left few  
 About the head he had all behind made waste.  
 Then he began: "Thou wiltst that I renew  
 Desperate grief, that wrings my very heart 5  
 Even at the thought, before I tell it you.  
 But if my words prove seed for fruit to start  
 Of infamy for the traitor I gnaw now  
 Thou shalt hear words that with my weeping smart,  
 Albeit I know not who thou art, nor how 10  
 'Thou hast descended hither, Florentine,  
 Unless thy speech deceive me, seemest thou.  
 Know then that I was the Count Ugolin,  
 And this man Roger, the Archbishop: why  
 I neighbour him so close, shall now be seen, 15  
 That by the malice of his plotting I,  
 Trusting in him, was seized by treachery,  
 Needs not to tell, nor that I came to die.  
 But what hath not yet been reported thee,  
 How cruel was that dying, hear, and then 20  
 Judge with what injury he hath injured me.  
 The narrow slit within the prison-pen  
 That has from me the name of Famine's Tower  
 (And it must yet imprison other men)  
 Had shown me through its chink the beam of more 25  
 Than one moon, when the dream of evil taste  
 For me the curtain of the future tore.  
 This man appeared as master and lord who chased  
 The wolf, and the wolf-cubs over the mount  
 That lets not Pisan eyes on Lucca rest. 30

26. Just before dawn of the day when the door was to be nailed up, Ugolino has an allegorical dream; from lines 38-39 we learn that his companions

have ominous dreams, but of a more literal character.

28. "This man": Archbishop Ruggeri.

Hounds, trained and lean and eager, led the hunt  
 Where with Gualandi and Sismondi went  
 Lanfranchi; these he had posted in the front.  
 Full soon it seemed both sire and sons were spent;  
 And in my vision the strained flanks grew red 35  
 Where by the tearing teeth the flesh was rent.  
 When I awoke before the dawn, in dread,  
 I heard my children crying in their sleep,  
 Them who were with me, and they cried for bread.  
 Cruel art thou if thou from tears canst keep 40  
 To think of what my heart misgave in fear.  
 If thou weep not, at what then canst thou weep?  
 By now they were awake, and the hour drew near  
 When food should be set by us on the floor.  
 Still in the trouble of our dreams we were: 45  
 And down in the horrible tower I heard the door  
 Nailed up. Without a word I looked anew  
 Into my sons' faces, all the four.  
 I wept not, so to stone within I grew.  
 They wept; and one, my little Anselm, cried: 50  
 'You look so, Father, what has come on you?'  
 But I shed not a tear, neither replied  
 All that day nor the next night, until dawn  
 Of a new day over the world rose wide.  
 A little of light crept in upon the stone 55  
 Of that dungeon of woe; and I saw there  
 On those four faces the aspect of my own.  
 I bit upon both hands in my despair;  
 And they supposing it was in the access  
 Of hunger, rose up with a sudden prayer, 60  
 And said: 'O Father, it will hurt much less  
 If you of us eat: take what once you gave  
 To clothe us, this flesh of our wretchedness.'  
 Then, not to make them sadder, I made me brave  
 That day and the one after we were dumb. 65  
 Hard earth, couldst thou not open for our grave?  
 But when to the fourth morning we were come,  
 Gaddo at my feet stretched himself with a cry:  
 'Father, why won't you help me?' and lay numb  
 And there died. Ev'n as thou seest me, saw I, 70  
 One after the other, the three fall: they drew,  
 Between the fifth and sixth day, their last sigh.  
 I, blind now, groping arms about them threw,

32-33. Gualandi, Sismondi and Lanfranchi are the leaders of the Pisan Ghibellines; in the dream they figure as huntsmen.



And still called on them that were two days gone.  
 Then fasting did what anguish could not do." 75  
 He ceased, and twisting round his eyes, thereon  
 Seized again on the lamentable skull  
 With teeth strong as a dog's upon the bone.  
 Ah, Pisa! thou offence to the whole people  
 Of the fair land where sound is heard of Si, 80  
 Since vengeance in thy neighbours' hands is dull,  
 Caprara and Gorgona shifted be  
 Into Arno's mouth, and Arno back be rolled,  
 That every living soul be drowned in thee!  
 For if Count Ugolin by treachery sold 85  
 Thy forts, it was not cause thou shouldst torment  
 His little sons, whatever of him was told.  
 Their youth, O thou new Thebes, made innocent  
 Uguiccione and Brigata, and those  
 Two others named already in that lament. 90  
 We passed on, where the frost imprisons close  
 Another crew, stark in a rugged heap,  
 Not bent down, but reversed all where they froze.  
 The very weeping there forbids to weep;  
 And the grief, finding in the eyes a stop, 95  
 Turns inward, to make anguish bite *more* deep.  
 For their first tears collect in one great drop,  
 And like a vizer of crystal, in the space  
 Beneath the brows, fill all the hollow up.  
 And now although, as with a callous place 100  
 Upon the skin, because the cold stung so,  
 All feeling had departed from my face,  
 It seemed as if I felt some wind to blow.  
 Wherefore I: "Master, who is it moves this air?  
 Is not all heat extinguished here below?" 105  
 Whereto he answered: "Soon shalt thou be where,  
 Seeing the cause which poureth down the gust,  
 Thine eye to this the answer shall declare."  
 And one sad shadow amid the icy crust

75. Hunger did more than grief could do: it caused my death.

80. The languages of Europe were classified according to the word for "yes," Italian being the language of si.

81. "Thy neighbours": Lucca and Florence, which waged bitter war against Pisa.

82. "Caprara and Gorgona": two small islands in the sea not far from the mouth of the Arno, beside which Pisa lies.

85. The archbishop represented to

the Pisans that Ugolino, in 1285, had betrayed them in the matter of five strongholds which he had allowed Lucca and Florence to occupy. In reality the cession of these castles was a necessary piece of diplomacy.

88. Thebes being the wickedest city of the ancients, Dante calls Pisa the "new Thebes."

90. "Two others": Anselmuccio and Gaddo. Gaddo and Uguccione were Ugolino's sons, Brigata and Anselmuccio his grandsons.

Cried to us: "O ye souls, so cruel found, 110  
 That into the last dungeon ye are thrust,  
 Raise the stiff veils wherein my face is bound,  
 So that the grief which chokes my heart have vent  
 A little, ere the weeping harden round."  
 Wherefore I: "Tell me, if I to this consent, 115  
 Who art thou; if I do not succour thee,  
 May I to the bottom of the ice be sent."  
 "I am Friar Alberic," then he answered me;  
 "Ile of the fruits out of the bad garden,  
 Who, dates for figs, receive here my full fee." 120  
 "Oh," replied I to him, "thou art dead, then,  
 Already?" He answered, "I have no knowledge  
 How stands my body in the world of men.  
 This Ptolomea hath such privilege  
 That often a soul falls down into this place 125  
 Ere Atropos the fated thread abridge.  
 And that thou may'st more willingly the glaze  
 Of tears wipe from my cheek-bones' nakedness,  
 Know that, on the instant when the soul betrays,  
 As I did, comes a demon to possess 130  
 Its body, and thenceforth ruleth over it  
 Until the timed hour come for its decease.  
 The soul falls headlong to this cistern-pit:  
 The body of him who winters there behind  
 Perhaps among men still appears to sit. 135  
 Thou must, if newly come, call it to mind;  
 It is Ser Branca d' Oria. Years enough  
 Have passed since he was to his prison assigned."  
 "I think," I said, "that thou dost lie; whereof  
 Proof is, that Branca d' Oria never died, 140  
 And eats, drinks, sleeps, and puts clothes on and off."  
 "Up there with the Evil Talons," he replied,  
 "Where sticky pitch is boiling in its bed,  
 Not yet had Michel Zanche come to bide,  
 When this man left a devil in his stead 145  
 In his own body, and in one of his house  
 Who with him played the traitor and did the deed.  
 But stretch thy hand out hither and uncloze  
 My eyes for me." And I unclosed them not;

120. "Dates for figs," that is: I am being repaid with interest, a date being worth more than a fig.

126. "Atropos": the Fate who cuts the thread of life.

145. Branca's soul, leaving a devil in its stead, reached this ninth circle as soon as the murdered man's soul (Michel Zanche) reached the eighth.

And to be rude to him was courteous. 190  
 Ah, Genoese, who have utterly forgot  
 All honesty, and in corruption abound,  
 Why from the earth will none your people blot?  
 For with Romagna's evillest spirit I found  
 One of you, who, for deeds he did contrive 155  
 Even now in soul is in Cocytus drowned  
 And still in body appears on earth alive.

CANTO XXXIV

[There remains the last ring of the circle, the *Giudecca* (so named from Judas Iscariot), where the sinners are wholly imprisoned in the ice. Here at the centre of the earth is the monstrous form of Lucifer, half above the ice and half below it. He has three heads; and in his teeth are mangled the spirits of Judas, of Brutus, and of Cassius. All has now been seen. Dante puts his arms round Virgil's neck; and Virgil, clinging by Lucifer's shaggy side, lets himself down to his waist; there he turns round (at the center of gravity in the universe), so that his head is where his feet had been, and climbs in the opposite direction, *i.e.* toward the antipodes, which, except for the Mount of Purgatory, is all water. By a long passage in the rock the poets climb up till through a round opening they see the stars, and emerge at last in the southern hemisphere on the shores of the Mount of Purgatory surrounded by the sea.]

"The banners of the King of Hell proceed  
 Toward us," my Guide said. "If thine eyes avail  
 To espy him, forward gaze and give good heed."  
 As when the thick autumnal mists exhale,  
 Or when night draws down on our hemisphere, 5  
 A mill shows far away with turning sail,  
 Such structure to my eyes seemed now to appear;  
 And, for the wind that blew, I shrank behind  
 My Master, because else no rock was near.  
 Now was I (verse for them I fear to find) 10  
 There where the frozen spirits as in glass  
 Were covered wholly, and there like straw they shined.  
 Some prostrate lie, some standing in their place,  
 This on its head, that on its soles upright,  
 Another like a bow bends feet to face. 15  
 When we had gone so far as appeared right  
 For the good Master's purpose to reveal  
 To me the creature that was once so bright,

He turned about and stayed me upon my heel,  
 Saying: "Behold Dis, and the place behold 20  
 Where thou thy soul with fortitude must steel."  
 How faint I then became, how frozen cold,  
 Ask me not, Reader; for I write it not,  
 Because all speech would fail, whate'er it told.  
 I died not, yet of life remained no jot. 25  
 Think thou then, if of wit thou hast any share,  
 What I became, deprived of either lot.  
 The Emperor of the kingdom of despair  
 From the mid-breast emerged out of the ice;  
 And I may with a giant more compare 30  
 Than giants with those monstrous arms of his:  
 Consider now how huge must be the whole  
 Proportioned to the part of such a size.  
 If he was once fair as he now is foul,  
 And 'gainst his Maker dared his brows to raise, 35  
 Fitly from him all streams of sorrow roll.  
 O what a marvel smote me with amaze  
 When I beheld three faces on his head!  
 The one in front showed crimson to my gaze:  
 Therunto were the other faces wed 40  
 Over the middle of either shoulder's height,  
 And where the crest would be, their union made.  
 The right was coloured between yellow and white,  
 The left was such to look upon as those  
 Who come from where Nile flows out of the night. 45  
 Two mighty wings from under each arose  
 Commensurable with so great a bird:  
 Never did sails at sea such form disclose.  
 Feathers they had not, but like bats appeared  
 The fashion of them, and with these he flapped 50  
 So that three winds were from their motion stirred.  
 Thence all Cocytus was in frost enwrapped.  
 He wept with six eyes, and the tears beneath  
 Over three chins with bloody slaver dropt.  
 At each mouth he was tearing with his teeth 55  
 A sinner, as is flax by heckle frayed;  
 Each of the three of them so suffereth.  
 The one in front naught of the biting made  
 Beside the clawing, which at whiles so wrought

[20. *Dis*: Lucifer, or Satan.—J. C. McG.]

30–31. A rough computation makes *Dis* more than a third of a mile in stature.

34–36. If Lucifer's beauty, as God created him, was equal to his present ugliness, his revolt against his Creator was an act of such monstrous ingratitude as to be a fitting source of all subsequent sin and sorrow.

That on the back the skin remained all flayed. 60  
 "That soul up there to the worst penance brought  
 Is Judas the Iscariot," spoke my Lord.  
 "His head within, he plies his legs without.  
 Of the other two, hanging with head downward,  
 Brutus it is whom the black mouth doth maul. 65  
 See how he writhes and utters not a word!  
 Cassius the other who seems so large to sprawl.  
 But night again is rising; time is now  
 That we depart from hence. We have seen all."  
 I clung about his neck, he showed me how, 70  
 And choosing well the time and place to trust,  
 When the great wings were opened wide enow,  
 He clutched him to the shaggy-sided bust,  
 And climbed from tuft to tuft down, slipping by  
 Between the matted hair and icy crust. 75  
 When we were come to that part where the thigh  
 Turns on the thickness of the haunches' swell,  
 My Guide with effort and with difficulty  
 Turned his head where his feet had been; the fell  
 He grappled then as one who is mounting, so 80  
 That I conceived us turning back to Hell.  
 "I hold fast by me, for needs must that we go,"  
 Said my Guide, panting like a man quite spent,  
 "By such a ladder from the core of woe."  
 And issuing through the rock where it was rent 85  
 He made me sit upon the rock's edge there;  
 Then toward me moved, eye upon step intent.  
 I lifted up my eyes, and Lucifer  
 Thought to have seen as I had left him last;  
 And saw him with legs uppermost appear. 90  
 And if into perplexity I was cast  
 Let them be judge who are so gross of wit  
 They see not what the point is I had passed.  
 "Rise up now," said the Master, "upon thy feet.  
 The way is long, and arduous the road. 95  
 The sun in mid-tierce now repairs his heat."  
 No palace-chamber was it that now showed  
 Its flinty floor, but natural dungeon this,  
 Which but a starving of the light allowed.

68. By the time of Jerusalem, it is the evening of Saturday, April 9, 1300. The poets have spent twenty-four hours in their downward journey.

85. Through the chink between Satan's thigh and the rocky bottom of the ice, they emerge into a cavern

which is situated on the other side of the earth's center. Virgil puts Dante down on the brink of the crevice.

90. "Tierce" embracing the three hours following sunrise, "midtierce" is about half-past seven o'clock in the morning.

"Master, before I pluck me from the abyss," 100  
 Said I, when I had risen erect, "speak on  
 A little, so my error to dismiss.  
 Where is the ice? And how is he, head prone,  
 Thus fixt? And how so soon is it possible  
 The sun from evening has to morning run?" 105  
 And he: "Thou dost imagine thyself still  
 On the other side of the centre, where I gript  
 'The hair of the Worm that thrids the earth with ill.  
 There wast thou while with thee I downward slipt;  
 But when I turned round, from that point we fled 110  
 Whereonto weight from every part is heaped.  
 Now thou art under the hemisphere's deep bed  
 Opposite that where spreads the continent  
 Of land, 'neath whose meridian perished  
 The Man who sinless came and sinless went. 115  
 Thou hast thy feet upon a little sphere,  
 Whose surface is Giudecca's complement;  
 When it is evening there, 'tis morning here.  
 And he whose hair for us a ladder made  
 Is still fixed as before and doth not stir. 120  
 He fell from Heaven on this side and there stayed.  
 And all the land which ere that stood forth dry,  
 Covered itself with sea, by him dismayed,  
 And came to our hemisphere; and, him to fly,  
 Perhaps, what on this side is seen around 125  
 Left its place here void and shot up on high."  
 'There is a cave that stretches underground  
 Far from Beelzebub as his tomb extends,  
 Known not by sight, but only by the sound  
 Of a stream flowing, that therein descends 130  
 Along the hollow of rock that it has gnawed,  
 Nor falleth steeply down, but winds and bends.  
 The Guide and I, entering that secret road,  
 Toiled to return into the world of light,  
 Nor thought on any resting-place bestowed. 135

105. As Dante presently learns, the change from evening to morning is due, not to any unusual movement of the sun, but to the altered position of the observers, who have passed from one hemisphere to the other. The difference in time between them is 12 hours.

112-117. "Hemisphere" means here hemisphere of the sky, not of the earth. It is the celestial hemisphere which covers the terrestrial Hemisphere of Water. Opposite to it is the celestial hemisphere "'neath whose meridian" lies Jerusalem, where Jesus was slain. The

"sphere" of line 116 is the circular block of ice and stone immediately surrounding Satan. On the Hell side it is ice, on the other side it is stone.

121-126. At the time of their creation, sea and land were not separated. Then Satan fell, and all the land shrank away from the surface of the side where he descended, leaving a vast empty bed to be filled by the sea. The ground which he traversed "perhaps" fled away from him, and issued forth to form the Island of Purgatory, leaving a vacant cavern near the center.

We climbed, he first, I following, till to sight  
 Appeared those things of beauty that heaven wears  
 Glimpsed through a rounded opening, faintly bright;  
 Thence issuing, we beheld again the stars.

*Purgatory (Purgatorio)*

CANTO I

[Having emerged from Hell, Virgil and Dante find themselves on the eastern shores of the island-mountain of Purgatory, which is at the antipodes of Jerusalem. It is the dawn of Easter Day, 1300. Four stars, symbols of the cardinal virtues (perhaps suggested by descriptions of the Southern Cross), blaze in the sky. Cato, the Guardian of Purgatory, appears to the poets and questions them. Being satisfied by Virgil, he tells them to wait for the daylight; but first Virgil is to wash Dante's face with dew and to gird him with a reed.]

Now hoisteth sail the pinnacle of my wit  
 For better waters, and more smoothly flies  
 Since of a sea so cruel she is quit,  
 And of that second realm, which purifies  
 Man's spirit of its soilure, will I sing, 5  
 Where it becometh worthy of Paradise.  
 Here let dead Poesy from her grave up-spring,  
 O sacred Muses, whom I serve and haunt,  
 And sound, Calliope, a louder string  
 To accompany my song with that high chant 10  
 Which smote the Magpies' miserable choir  
 That they despaired of pardon for their vaunt.  
 Tender colour of orient sapphire  
 Which on the air's translucent aspect grew,  
 From mid heaven to horizon deeply clear, 15  
 Made pleasure in mine eyes be born anew  
 Soon as I issued forth from the dead air  
 That had oppressed both eye and heart with rue.  
 The planet that promoteth Love was there,  
 Making all the East to laugh and be joyful, 20  
 And veiled the Fishes that escorted her.

139. The descent through Hell occupied Friday night and Saturday. [The ascent from the bottom of Hell to the surface of the earth on the island of Purgatory occupied all of Saturday night.—J. C. McG.] Each of the three great divisions of the poem ends with the sweet and hopeful word "stars."

20-11. The Magpies were the nine

daughters of King Pieros; they challenged the Muses to a contest and, being worsted by one of them, Calliope, became so insolent that they were turned into birds.

21. Venus was dimming, by her brighter light, the constellation of the Fishes; the time indicated is an hour or more before sunrise.

I turned to the right and contemplated all  
 The other pole; and four stars o'er me came,  
 Never yet seen save by the first people.  
 All the heavens seemed exulting in their flame. 25  
 O widowed Northern clime, from which is ta'en  
 The happy fortune of beholding them!  
 When from my gaze I had severed them again,  
 Turned somewhat to the other pole, whose law  
 By now had sunken out of sight the Wain, 30  
 Near me an old man solitary I saw,  
 In his aspect so much to be revered  
 That no son owes a father more of awe.  
 Long and with white hairs brindled was his beard,  
 Like to his locks, of which a double list 35  
 Down on his shoulders and his breast appeared.  
 The beams of the four sacred splendours kist  
 His countenance, and they glorified it so  
 That in its light the sun's light was not missed.  
 "Who are ye, that against the blind stream go," 40  
 Shaking those venerable plumes, he said,  
 "And flee from the eternal walls of woe?  
 Who hath guided you? what lamp your footsteps led,  
 Issuing from that night without fathom  
 Which makes a blackness of the vale of dread? 45  
 Is the law of the abyss thus broken from?  
 Or is there some new change in Heaven's decrees,  
 That, being damned, unto my crags ye come?"  
 Then did my leader on my shoulder seize  
 And with admonishing hand and word and sign 50  
 Make reverent my forehead and my knees;  
 Then spoke: "I come not of my own design.  
 From Heaven came down a Lady, at whose prayer,  
 To help this man, I made his pathway mine.  
 But since it is thy will that we declare 55  
 More of our state, needs must that I obey  
 And tell thee all: deny thee I would not dare.  
 He hath never yet seen darken his last day,  
 Yet so near thereto through his folly went  
 That short time was there to re-shape his way. 60

23-24. Dante invents here a constellation of four bright lights, corresponding to the Great Bear of the north. These luminaries symbolize the four cardinal virtues: Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice. Adam and Eve before the fall ("the first people"), dwelling at the top of the mountain of

Purgatory, beheld these stars.

31. This custodian of Purgatory (an example of that free will which the souls in his domain are striving, by purification, to regain) is Cato the Younger, who on earth killed himself in Utica rather than submit to Caesar.



Even as I said, to his rescue I was sent,  
 Nor other way appeared that was not vain  
 But this on which our footsteps now are bent.  
 I have shown him all the sinners in their pain,  
 And now intend to show him those who dwell 65  
 Under thy charge and cleanse themselves of stain.  
 How I have brought him were too long to tell.  
 Our steps a Virtue, helping from on high,  
 That he might see thee and hear thee, did impel.  
 Now on his coming look with gracious eye. 70  
 He seeketh freedom, that so precious thing,  
 How precious, he knows who for her will die.  
 Thou knowest: for her sake, death had no sting  
 In Utica, where thou didst leave what yet  
 The great day shall for thy bright raiment bring. 75  
 The eternal laws are still inviolate;  
 For he doth live, nor me doth Minos bind.  
 But I am of the circle where the chaste eyes wait  
 Of Marcia, visibly praying that thy mind,  
 O sainted breast, still hold her for thine own. 80  
 For love of her, then, be to us inclined.  
 Suffer that thy seven realms to us be shown;  
 And thanks of thee shall unto her be brought,  
 If there below thou deign still to be known."  
 "Marcia was so pleasing to my thought. 85  
 Yonder," he answered, "and myself so fond,  
 Whate'er she willed, I could refuse her naught.  
 Now no more may she move me, since beyond  
 The evil stream she dwells, by the decree  
 Made when I was delivered from that bond. 90  
 But if a heavenly lady hath missioned thee,  
 As thou hast said, of flattery is no need.  
 Enough, that in her name thou askest me.  
 Go then; first gird this man with a smooth reed,  
 And see thou bathe his features in such wise 95  
 That from all filthiness they may be freed.  
 It were not meet that mist clouded his eyes  
 To dim their vision, when he goes before  
 The first of those that serve in Paradise.  
 This little isle, there where for evermore 100  
 The waters beat all round about its foot,

77-79. Minos, the Judge of Hell,  
 does not bind Virgil, who dwells in  
 the Limbus. "Marcia" was Cato's wife.  
 88-90. When Cato was released

from Limbus by Christ, he became  
 subject to the law forbidding the  
 blessed to be moved by the fate of the  
 damned.

Bears rushes on the soft and oozy shore.  
 No other plant that would put forth a shoot  
 Or harden, but from life there is debarred,  
 Since to the surf it yields not from its root. 105  
 And then return not this way afterward.  
 The sun, at point to rise now, shall reveal  
 Where the mount yieldeth an ascent less hard."  
 So he vanished; and I rose up on my heel  
 Without word spoken, and all of me drew back 110  
 Toward my guide, making with mine eyes appeal.  
 He began: "Son, follow thou in my track.  
 Turn we on our footsteps, for this way the lea  
 Slopes down, where the low banks its boundary make."  
 The dawn was moving the dark hours to flee 115  
 Before her, and far off amid their wane  
 I could perceive the trembling of the sea.  
 We paced along the solitary plain,  
 Like one who seeks to his lost road a clue,  
 And till he reach it deems he walks in vain. 120  
 When we had come there where the melting dew  
 Contends against the sun, being in a place  
 Where the cool air but little of it updrew,  
 My Lord laid both hands out on the lank grass  
 Gently, amid the drops that it retained: 125  
 Wherefore I, conscious what his purpose was,  
 Lifted to him my cheeks that tears had stained;  
 And at his touch the colour they had worn,  
 Ere Hell had overcast it, they regained.  
 Then came we down to the land's desert bourne, 130  
 Which never yet saw man that had essayed  
 Voyage upon that water and knew return.  
 There did he gird me as that other bade.  
 O miracle! even as it was before,  
 The little plant put forth a perfect blade 135  
 On the instant in the place his fingers tore.

## CANTO II

[The sun rises. A boat, steered by an angel, swiftly approaches the shore; it contains a company of spirits brought to Purgatory. These landed, the angel with the boat departs to collect other spirits at the mouth of the Tiber. Among the newcomers Dante recognizes a friend; it is Casella the musician. Casella is persuaded to sing, and the spirits gather round to listen, when Cato appears and rebukes them for loitering, and they scatter up the slopes of the mountain.]

Now the sun touched the horizon with his flame,  
 The circle of whose meridian, at the height  
 It reaches most, covers Jerusalem;  
 And opposite to him in her circling, Night  
 Came up from Ganges, and the Scales with her 5  
 That from her hand fall as she grows in might;  
 So that the fair cheeks of Aurora, there  
 Where I was, gave their red and white away,  
 Sallowing, as if old age had turned them sere.  
 We lingered yet by the ocean-marge, as they 16  
 Who think upon the road that lies before  
 And in their mind go, but in body stay;  
 And lo! as at the approach of morning froze  
 Mars through the mist glimmers a fiery red  
 Down in the West over the ocean-floor, 15  
 (May mine eyes yet upon that sight be fed!)  
 Appeared, moving across the water, a light  
 So swift, all earthly motion it outsped.  
 From which when for a space I had drawn my sight  
 Away, and of my Guide the meaning sought, 20  
 I saw it now grown bigger and more bright.  
 On either side of it I knew not what  
 Of white appeared to gleam out; and below  
 Another whiteness by degrees it got.  
 My master spoke not yet a word, till lo! 25  
 When those first whitenesses as wings shone free  
 And his eyes now could well the Pilot know,  
 He exclaimed: "Bend, see that thou bend the knee.  
 Behold the Angel of God! Lay hand to hand!  
 Such ministers henceforth thou art to see. 30  
 Look, how he scorneth aid that man hath planned,  
 And wills not oar nor other sail to ply,  
 But only his own wings from far land to land.  
 See how he has them stretcht up toward the sky,  
 Sweeping the air with that eternal plume 35  
 Which moulteth not as the hair of things that die."  
 Such an exceeding brightness did allume  
 The Bird of God, who near and nearer bore,

1-6. This is one of the astronomical riddles to which our poet was addicted. According to medieval cosmology, Jerusalem and Purgatory are on opposite sides of the earth, 180° from each other: when Jerusalem sees the sun rise, Purgatory sees it set. The river Ganges, which flowed on the eastern confines of the inhabited world, stands for the "east." What we are

told, in a devious and ingenious way, is that for the spectators on the island of Purgatory the sun was rising.

7-9. The poet transfers to the face of the goddess of dawn (Aurora) the changing colors of the morning sky.

16. "May mine eyes . . .": after death, when my soul shall be wafted to Purgatory.

Mine eyes to endure him might not now presume,  
 But bent them down; and he came on to shore 40  
 Upon a barque so swift and light and keen  
 As scarcely a ripple from the water tore.  
 On the heavenly Steersman at the stern was seen  
 Inscribed that blissfulness whereof he knew;  
 And more than a hundred spirits sat within. 45  
 Together all were singing *In exitu*  
*Israel de Egypto* as one host  
 With what of that psalm doth those words ensue.  
 With the holy sign their company he crossed;  
 Whereat themselves forth on the strand they threw: 50  
 Swift as he came, he sped, and straight was lost.  
 They that remained seemed without any clue  
 To the strange place, casting a wondering eye  
 Round them, like one assaying hazards new.  
 On every side the arrowing sun shot high 55  
 Into the day, and with his bright arrows  
 Had hunted Capricorn from the mid sky,  
 When the new people lifted up their brows  
 Towards us, and spoke to us: "If ye know it, show  
 What path to us the mountain-side allows." 60  
 And Virgil answered: "Peradventure you  
 Suppose we have experience of the way;  
 But we are pilgrims, even as ye are too.  
 We came but now, a little before you, nay,  
 By another road than yours, so steep and rude 65  
 That the climb now will seem to us but play."  
 The spirits, who by my breathing understood  
 That I was still among the living things,  
 Marvelling, became death-pale where they stood.  
 As round a messenger, who the olive brings, 70  
 Folk, to hear news, each on the other tread,  
 And none is backward with his elbowings,  
 So on my face their gaze intently fed  
 Those spirits, all so fortunate, and forgot  
 Almost to go up and be perfected. 75  
 One of them now advanced, as if he sought  
 To embrace me, with a love so fond and fain,  
 That upon me to do the like he wrought.  
 O Shades, in all but aspect, void and vain!

57. At dawn the constellation of Capricorn was on the meridian; it is effaced by the rays of the rising sun.

70. Bearers of good tidings used to carry an olive branch.

79-81. Throughout Hell the souls, though without weight, are not only visible but tangible. On the lower slopes of the mountain of Purgatory, however, Dante cannot touch a shade, although two spirits can still embrace.

Behind it thrice my hands did I enlace, 80  
 And thrice they came back to my breast again.  
 Wonder, I think, was painted on my face;  
 At which the spirit smiled and backward drew,  
 And, following it, I sprang forward a pace.  
 Gently it bade me pause: and then I knew 85  
 Who it was, and prayed him pity on me to show  
 And talk with me as he was used to do.  
 "As in the mortal body I loved thee, so  
 In my release I love thee," he answered me.  
 "Therefore I stay: but thou, why dost thou go?" 90  
 "Casella mine, that this place I may see  
 Hereafter," I said, "have I this journey made.  
 But how hath so much time been stolen from thee?"  
 And he to me: "None have I to upbraid  
 If he who takes when he chooses, and whom, 95  
 'This passage many times to me forbade.  
 For in a just will hath his will its home.  
 Truly he has taken now these three months past  
 Whoso hath wished to enter, in all welcome.  
 So I, whose eyes on the sea-shore were cast 100  
 Where Tiber's water by the salt is won,  
 By him was gathered in benignly at last.  
 To that mouth now his wings he urgeth on  
 Because for ever assemble in that spot  
 They who are not to sink towards Acheron." 105  
 And I: "If a new law forbid thee not  
 Memory and usage of the enamoured song  
 Which used to soothe all wishes of my thought,  
 May it please thee awhile to solace with thy tongue  
 My spirit that, in its mortal mask confined, 110  
 'The journey hither bitterly hath wrung."  
 "Love that discourseth to me in my mind"  
 Began he then so sweetly, that the sound  
 Still in my heart with sweetness is entwined.  
 My Master and I, and all that people around 115  
 Who were with him, had faces so content  
 As if all else out of their thoughts were drowned.

91. Of Casella we know only that he was a musician of Florence and a close friend of the poet and, perhaps, that he set to music Dante's canzone, "Love that discourseth to me in my mind" (see line 112).

92-93. Dante's present experience is intended to fit him to return to Purgatory after death. Casella evidently had died some time before, and Dante

is astonished to see him just arrived in the other world.

95-97. "He who takes . . .": the angelic boatman. "In a just will . . .": the will of God.

101. The "Tiber's water" signifies allegorically the Church of Rome. There congregate the souls of those who die in its bosom. The souls of the unrepentant descend to Acheron.

We to his notes, entranced, our senses lent:  
 And lo! the old man whom all the rest revere  
 Crying, "What is this, ye laggard spirits faint? 120  
 What truancy, what loitering is here?  
 Haste to the Mount and from the slough be freed  
 Which lets not God unto your eyes appear."  
 As doves, when picking corn or darnel seed,  
 All quiet and close-crowding to that fare, 125  
 Their strut of pride forgotten in their greed,  
 If anything appear their hearts to scare  
 On the instant leave the food there, where it lies,  
 Because they are assailed by greater care,  
 So saw I that new company arise, 130  
 And leave the song, and the steep slope essay.  
 Like one who goes, knowing not of where he hies:  
 Nor with less haste went we upon our way.

## CANTO XIX

[In a dream Dante has a vision of the Siren (symbolizing worldly enticements). A lady from heaven appears in this dream; and Virgil, at her bidding, exposes the Siren's real foulness. Dante is roused by Virgil, the sun having now risen, and an angel speeds them up the passage to the fifth terrace, where are the souls of the avaricious and the prodigal, lying prone on the ground. Virgil asks the way, and is answered by one who proves to be Pope Adrian V. He tells them that he was possessed by avarice till he reached the highest office, and then turned to God. Dante kneels, to show his reverence, but is told by the spirit to rise.]

In that hour when the heat of day no more  
 Can warm the Moon's cold influence, and it dies  
 O'ercome by the earth or whiles by Saturn's power;  
 When geomancers see in the East arise  
 Their Greater Fortune, ere the dawn be come, 5  
 By a path which not long dark before it lies,  
 In dream came to me a woman stuttering dumb,  
 With squinting eyes and twisted on her feet,  
 With deformed hands and cheeks of pallor numb.  
 I gazed on her; and as the sun's good heat 10  
 Comforteth cold limbs weighed down by the night,  
 So did my look make her tongue nimbly feat,  
 And straightened her and set her all upright

4. "Geomancers" foretold the future by means of figures constructed on points that were distributed by chance. One of their figures, called "Greater Fortune," resembled a constellation.

In short time, and her ruined countenance made  
 Into the colour which is love's delight. 15  
 Soon as her loosened tongue came to her aid,  
 She began singing, so that for its sake  
 From her voice hardly had my hearing strayed.  
 "I am," she said, "the sweet Siren, who make  
 Mariners helpless, charmed in the mid-sea; 20  
 Such pleasure in my music do men take.  
 I turned Ulysses from his wandering, he  
 So loved my song; and who with me hath found  
 Home, seldom quits, so glad is he of me."  
 Her lips were not yet closed upon the sound 25  
 When came a lady in whom was holiness  
 Prompt to my side, that other to confound.  
 "O Virgil, Virgil, tell me who is this?"  
 Indignantly she said; and straight he went  
 With eyes fixt on that honest one, to seize 30  
 The other, and when her garments he had rent,  
 He laid her open and showed her belly creased,  
 'That waked me with the stench that forth it sent.  
 I turned my eyes, and Virgil said: "At least  
 Thrice have I called thee; up, let us begone! 35  
 Find we the opening where thou enterest."  
 I raised me up; high day now overshadowed  
 'The holy mount and filled each winding ledge.  
 We went, and at our back was the new sun.  
 I followed him, like one who is the siege 40  
 Of heavy thought that droops his forehead, when  
 He makes himself the half-arch of a bridge.  
 And I heard: "Come! Here is the pass"; spoken  
 With so much loving kindness in the tone  
 As is not heard in this our mortal pen. 45  
 With outspread wings that shone white as a swan  
 He who thus spoke guided our journeying  
 Upward between the two walls of hard stone.  
 Stirring his plumes, he fanned us with his wing  
 And named *qui lugent* blessed, for that they 50  
 Shall dispense consolation, like a king.  
 We both had passed the angel a little way  
 When, "What now ails thee that thine eyes are so  
 Fixt on the ground?" my Guide began to say.  
 And I: "In such misgiving do I go 55  
 From a strange dream which doth my mind possess  
 So that the thought I cannot from me throw."

50. "*Qui lugent*": those who mourn.

"Sawest thou," he said, "that ancient sorceress  
 For whom alone the mount above us waits?  
 Sawest thou how man obtains from her release? 60  
 Let that suffice: beat the earth down with thy heels;  
 Turn thine eyes toward the lure which from his seat  
 The Eternal King spins round with the great wheels."  
 As a falcon, that first gazes at his feet,  
 Turns at the cry and stretches him beyond 65  
 Where desire draws him thither to his meat,  
 Such I became; and far as, for one bound  
 Upwards, a path is cloven through the stone,  
 Such went I up to where one must go round.  
 Soon as I was enlarged on the fifth zone 70  
 I saw on it a weeping multitude  
 With faces to the ground all lying prone.  
 My spirit *clave unto the dust*, I could  
 Hear them cry out, with sighings and laments  
 So that the words hardly were understood. 75  
 "O ye chosen of God, whose punishments  
 Both hope and justice make less hard to bear,  
 Direct our footsteps to the high ascents."  
 "If from the lying prone exempt ye are,  
 And wish the speediest way to be revealed, 80  
 Keep your right hands to the outside as ye fare."  
 This answer to the poet, who thus appealed,  
 Was made a little in front of us; therefore  
 I noted, as each spoke, what was concealed.  
 My Lord then with my eyes I turned to implore, 85  
 Whereat his glad sign of assent I caught  
 To what my eager look was craving for.  
 Then, free to do according to my thought,  
 I passed forward above that creature there  
 Whose words before had made me of him take note, 90  
 Saying: "Spirit, in whom weeping ripens fair  
 That without which one cannot turn to God,  
 Suspend for me awhile thy greater care.  
 Who thou wast, tell me, and why to earth ye are bowed,  
 Face down, and if thou would'st that I should win 95  
 Aught for thee yonder, whence I tread this road."  
 And he: "Why turned to Heaven our backs have been  
 Thou shalt learn; but first *scias quod ego*  
*Fui successor Petri*. Down between

59. "Above us": in the three upper circles.

62. "The lure . . .": the uplifting influence of the revolving heavens.

70. This is the circle of avarice and prodigality.

92. The fruit of repentance.

98. "Know that I was a successor of Peter." The speaker is Pope Adrian V.



Sestri and Chiaveri waters flow 100  
 Of a fair stream, wherefrom our old estate  
 Nameth the title it vaunts most to bestow.  
 One month, scarce more, taught me how weighs the great  
 Mantle on him who keeps it from the dirt,  
 So that all others seem a feather's weight. 105  
 Late came the day that could my soul convert,  
 But when the Roman Pastor I became,  
 Thus found I life to be with lies begirt.  
 I saw that there the heart no peace could claim,  
 Nor in that life could one mount higher: of this 110  
 Therefore the love sprang in me to a flame.  
 Up to that hour I, lost in avarice,  
 Was miserable, being a soul in want  
 Of God; thou seest here what my forfeit is.  
 Here of what avarice works is made the account, 115  
 In purge of souls converted ere the end;  
 And no more bitter penalty hath the mount.  
 Even as our eyes on high we would not send,  
 Which only upon earthly things were cast,  
 So here to earth Justice hath forced them bend. 120  
 As avarice turned all our works to waste  
 Because it quenched our love of all goodness,  
 Even so Justice here doth hold us fast,  
 Both hands and feet, in seizure and duress;  
 And so long as the just Lord hath assigned, 125  
 So long we lie stretched-out and motionless."  
 I had knelt down; to speak was in my mind;  
 But he, by the mere hearing, in that pause  
 Being aware that I my back inclined,  
 Said, "Dost thou bow thy knees? and for what cause?" 130  
 And I to him: "'Tis for your dignity:  
 My conscience pricked me, standing as I was."  
 "Make straight thy legs and rise up from thy knee,  
 Brother," he answered: "err not; of one Lord 135  
 I am fellow-servant with the rest and thee."  
 If thou hast understood that holy chord  
 The Gospel sounds which *Neque nubent* saith,  
 Thou mayest perceive well why I spoke that word.  
 Go now, and no more tarry upon thy path,  
 For thou disturb'st the tears wherewith I crave 140  
 To ripen what thyself didst say of faith.

101. "A fair stream": the Lavagna river. Adrian belonged to the Fieschi family, who were counts of Lavagna.

103. "One month": Adrian V held the papal office only for 38 days.

137. If thou hast interpreted *Neque nubent* ("They neither marry") in the broader sense, as meaning that earthly relations are not preserved in the spiritual world.

A nicce yonder, Alagia named, I have,  
 Good in herself, so only that our house  
 Her nature by example not deprave.  
 She only is there to assist me with her vows."

145

## CANTO XXVII

[Night is coming on, when the Angel of Chastity appears and tells Dante that he cannot go further without passing through the fire. He is terrified, remembering deaths by burning that he had witnessed on earth; and even Virgil's encouragement cannot overcome his fears till he is reminded that Beatrice awaits him beyond. The three pass through the fire and emerge at the place of ascent. Another angel warns them to hasten, as the sun is setting. Each now makes a bed for himself on a step of the stair. Dante sleeps, and dreams of Leah and Rachel, types of the active and contemplative life, foreshadowing the meeting with Matilda and Beatrice which is to come. He wakes with morning, and at the summit Virgil tells him that his mission is ended and that Dante now needs no guide or instructor.]

As when his first beams tremble in the sky  
 There, where his own Creator shed his blood,  
 While Ebro is beneath the Scales on high,  
 And noon scorches the wave on Ganges' flood,  
 Such was the sun's height; day was soon to pass;  
 When the angel of God joyful before us stood. 5  
 Outside the flames, above the bank, he was.  
*Beati mundo corde* we heard him sing  
 In a voice more living far than comes from us.  
 Then "None goes further, if first the fire not sting. 10  
 O hallowed spirits, enter unafraid  
 And to the chant beyond let your ears cling."  
 When we were near him, this to us he said.  
 Wherefore I, when I knew what his words meant,  
 Became as one who in the grave is laid. 15  
 Over my clasping hands forward I leant,  
 Eying the fire, and vivid to my mind  
 Men's bodies burning, once beheld, it sent.  
 Then toward me turned them both my escorts kind;  
 And Virgil said to me: "O my son, here 20  
 Torment, may-be, but death thou shalt not find.

142. "Alagia" de' Fieschi was the daughter of Adrian's brother Niccolò. 8. Matt. 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart."  
 1-5. The time described is the ap- proach of sunset.

Remember, O remember . . . and if thy fear  
     On Geryon into safety I recalled,  
     What shall I do now, being to God more near?  
 If thou within this womb of flames wert walled 25  
     Full thousand years, for certainty believe  
     That not of onc hair could they make thee bald.  
 And if perchance thou think'st that I deceive,  
     Go forward into them, and thy faith prove,  
     With hands put in the edges of thy sleeve. 30  
 Out of thy heart all fear remove, remove!  
     Turn hither and come confidently on!"  
 And I stood fixed and with my conscience strove.  
 When he beheld me still and hard as stone,  
     'Troubled a little, he said: "Look now, this same 35  
     Wall is 'twixt Beatrice and thee, my son."  
 As Pyramus at the sound of Thisbe's name  
     Opened his dying eyes and gazed at her  
     Then, when the crimson on the mulberry came,  
 So did I turn unto my wise Leader, 40  
     My hardness melted, hearing the name told  
     Which like a well-spring in my mind I bear.  
 Whereon he shook his head, saying: "Do we hold  
     Our wish to stay on this side?" He smiled then  
     As on a child by an apple's bribe cajoled. 45  
 Before me then the fire he entered in,  
     Praying Statius that he follow at his heel  
     Who for a long stretch now had walked between.  
 When I was in, I had been glad to reel,  
     Therefrom to cool me, into boiling glass, 50  
     Such burning beyond measure did I feel.  
 My sweet Father, to give me heart of grace,  
     Continued only on Beatrice to descant,  
     Saying: "Alrcady I seem to sec her face."  
 On the other side, to guide us, rose a chant, 55  
     And we, intent on that alone to dwell,  
     Came forth there, where the ascent began to slant.  
 And there we heard a voice *Venite* hail  
     *Benedicti patris mei* out of light  
     So strong, it mastered me and made me quail. 60  
 "The sun departs," it added; "comes the night.  
     Tarry not; study at good pace to go

39. The mulberry turned red on being spattered with the blood of Pyramus, who stabbed himself when he thought

Thisbe slain by a lion (Ovid, *Met.*, I', 55-166).  
 58-59. Matt. 25:34: "Come, ye blessed of my Father . . ."

Before the west has darkened on your sight."  
 Straight rose the path within the rock, and so  
 Directed onward, that I robbed the ray 65  
 Before me from the sun, already low.  
 I and my sages few steps did assay  
 When by the extinguished shadow we perceived  
 That now behind us had sunk down the day.  
 And ere the horizon had one hue received 70  
 In all the unmeasured regions of the air,  
 And night her whole expansion had achieved,  
 Each of us made his bed upon a stair,  
 Seeing that the nature of the mount o'ercame  
 Alike the power to ascend and the desire. 75  
 As goats, now ruminating, though the same  
 That, before feeding, brisk and wanton played  
 On the high places of the hills, grow tame,  
 Silent, while the sun scorches, in the shade,  
 Watched by the herd that props him hour by hour 80  
 Upon his staff and, propt so, tends his trade;  
 And as the shepherd, lodging out-of-door,  
 Watches night-long in quiet by his flock,  
 Wary lest wild beast scatter it or devour;  
 Such were we then, all three, within that nook, 85  
 I as a goat, they as a shepherd, there,  
 On this and that side hemmed by the high rock.  
 Little could there of the outside things appear;  
 But through that little I saw the stars to glow  
 Bigger than ordinary and shine more clear. 90  
 Ruminating and gazing on them so  
 Sleep took me; sleep which often will apprise  
 Of things to come, and ere the event foreknow.  
 In the hour, I think, when first from Eastern skies  
 Upon the mountain Cytherca beamed 95  
 Whom fire of love forever glorifies,  
 A lady young and beautiful I seemed  
 To see move through a plain and flower on flower  
 To gather; singing, she was saying (I dreamed),  
 "Let them know, whoso of my name inquire, 100  
 That I am Leah, and move my fingers fair  
 Around, to make me a garland for a tire.

[80. *herd*: herdsman.—J. C. McG.]

95. "Cytherca" is Venus, whose star shines before sunrise.

100. Dante is about to visit the Garden of Eden, the abode of innocence

and harmless activity. Consequently the active and the contemplative life are revealed to him in the form of Laban's daughters, Leah and Rachel.

To glad me at the glass I deck me here;  
 But never to her mirror is untrue  
 My sister Rachel, and sits all day there. 105  
 She is fain to hold her beauteous eyes in view  
 As me with these hands I am fain to adorn:  
 To see contenteth her, and me to do."  
 Already, through the splendour ere the morn,  
 Which to wayfarers the more grateful shows, 110  
 Lodging less far from home, where they return,  
 The shadows on all sides were fleeing, and close  
 On them my sleep fled; wherefore, having seen  
 The great masters risen already, I rose.  
 "That apple whose sweetness in their craving keen 115  
 Mortals go seeking on so many boughs  
 'This day shall peace to all thy hungers mean.'  
 Words such as these to me did Virgil use;  
 And no propitious gifts did man acquire  
 For pleasure matching these, to have or choose. 120  
 So came on me desire upon desire  
 To be above, that now with every tread  
 I felt wings on me growing to waft me higher.  
 When under us the whole high stair was sped  
 And we unto the topmost step had won, 125  
 Virgil, fixing his eyes upon me, said:  
 "The temporal and the eternal fire, my son,  
 Thou hast beheld: thou art come now to a part  
 Where of myself I see no farther on.  
 I have brought thee hither both by wit and art. 130  
 'Take for thy guide thine own heart's pleasure now.  
 Forth from the narrows, from the steeps, thou art.  
 See there the sun that shines upon thy brow;  
 See the young grass, the flowers and coppices  
 Which this soil, of itself alone, makes grow. 135  
 While the fair eyes are coming, full of bliss,  
 Which weeping made me come to thee before,  
 Amongst them thou canst go or sit at ease.  
 Expect from me no word or signal more.  
 Thy will is upright, sound of tissue, free: 140  
 To disobey it were a fault; wherefore  
 Over thyself I crown thee and mitre thee."

115. "That apple . . .": earthly happiness.

142. I make thee thine own Emperor and Pope.

## CANTO XXX

[Like the stars of Ursa Minor which guide sailors to port, the Seven Candlesticks, stars of the Empyrean, control the movements of those in the procession; and the elders who preceded the car now turn toward it, and one (who represents the Song of Solomon) calls on Beatrice to appear. Angels are seen scattering flowers, and in the midst of them a veiled lady clad in the colors of Faith, Hope, and Charity. It is Beatrice; and Dante experiences the same agitation in her presence, though her face is not revealed, as when he first saw her. Overcome, he turns for comfort to Virgil; but Virgil has now disappeared; and Beatrice addresses Dante by name, severe in look and in speech. Frozen by her reproaches, he is melted by the compassion of the angels, to whom Beatrice tells of Dante's life and disloyalty to her.]

Now when those Seven of the First Heaven stood still  
 Which rising and declension never knew  
 Nor veil of other mist than the evil will,  
 And which apprized each there what he should do,  
 Even as the starry Seven in lower air 5  
 Guide him to port who steereth by them true,  
 The people in whom truth doth itself declare,  
 Who first between it and the Gryphon came,  
 Turned to the car, as if their peace were there.  
 And one, as if Heaven prompted that acclaim, 10  
*Veni, sponsa, de Libano* chanted thrice,  
 And after him all the others cried the same.  
 As at the last trump shall the saints arise,  
 Crying alleluias to be re-attired  
 In flesh, up from the cavern where each lies, 15  
 Upon the heavenly chariot so inspired  
 A hundred sprang *ad vocem tanti senis*,  
 Messengers of eternal life, who quired  
 Singing together *Benedictus qui venis*,  
 While from their hands flowers up and down were  
 thrown, 20  
 And *Manibus O date lilia plenis*.  
 I have seen ere now at the beginning dawn  
 The region of the East all coloured rose,

1-4. "The First Heaven": the Empyrean.—"The evil will": man's sinfulness.—"There": in the procession of the Church.

5-6. As the Ursa Minor guides the helmsman.

11. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse." [Song of Solomon 4:8.—

J. C. McG.]

17. "At the voice of so great an elder."

19. "Blessed is he that cometh" (in the name of the Lord). [Matthew 21:9.—J. C. McG.]

21. "Oh, give lilies with full hands!" [Aeneid, Book VI, l. 883.—J. C. McG.]

(The pure sky else in beauty of peace withdrawn)  
 When shadowed the sun's face uprising shows, 25  
 So that the mists, attempering his powers,  
 Let the eye linger upon him in repose;  
 So now for me amid a cloud of flowers  
 That from the angels' hands up-floated light  
 And fell, withinside and without, in showers, 30  
 A lady, olive-crowned o'er veil of white,  
 Clothed in the colour of a living flame,  
 Under a mantle green, stole on my sight.  
 My spirit that a time too long to name  
 Had passed, since, at her presence coming nigh, 35  
 A trembling thing and broken it became,  
 Now by no recognition of the eye  
 But virtue invisible that went out from her  
 Felt old love seize me in all its mastery.  
 When smote my sight the high virtue that, ere 40  
 The years of boyhood were behind me laid,  
 Already had pierced me through, as with a spear,  
 With such trust as a child that is afraid  
 Or hurt, runs to his mother with his pains,  
 I turned me to the left, to seek me aid 45  
 And say to Virgil: "Scarce one drop remains  
 Of blood in me that trembles not: by this  
 I recognize the old flame within my veins."  
 But Virgil had from us his company's  
 Sweet solace taken, Virgil, father kind, 50  
 Virgil, who for my soul's weal made me his.  
 Nor all that our first mother had resigned  
 Availed to keep my cheeks, washed with the dew,  
 From tears that once more stained them, welling blind.  
 "Dante, that Virgil leaves thee, and from thy view 55  
 Is vanished, O not yet weep; weep not yet,  
 For thou must weep, another stab to rue."  
 Like the Admiral who on poop or prow is set,  
 To eye his men, in the other ships dispersed,  
 And comes, each heart to embolden and abet, 60  
 So on the left side of the car, when first  
 I turned, hearing my own name in my car  
 (Which of necessity is here rehearsed)  
 I found the gaze of her I had seen appear  
 Erewhile, veiled, in the angelic festival, 65  
 Toward me, this side the stream, directed clear;  
 Howbeit the veil she had from her head let fall,

With grey leaf of Minerva chapleted,  
 Disclosing her, did not disclose her all.  
 Still severe, standing in her queenlihead, 70  
 She spoke on, as one speaks whose purpose is  
 To keep the hottest word awhile unsaid.  
 "Look on me well: I am, I am Beatrice.  
 How, then, didst thou deign to ascend the Mount?  
 Knewest thou not that, here, man is in bliss?" 75  
 I dropt mine eyes down to the lucent fount,  
 But seeing myself there, drew them back in haste  
 To the grass, heavy upon my shame's account.  
 As to a child a mother looks stern-faced,  
 So to me seemed she: pity austere in thought 80  
 Hath in its savour a so bitter taste.  
 She ceased then, and from every angel throat  
 Straightway *In te, Domine, speravi* rose  
 But beyond *pedes meos* they passed not.  
 As on the chine of Italy the snows 85  
 Lodged in the living rafters harden oft  
 To freezing, when the North-East on them blows,  
 Then, inly melted, trickle from aloft,  
 If from the shadeless countries a breath stirs,  
 Like in the flame a candle melting soft, 90  
 So was I, without sighs and without tears,  
 In presence of their singing who accord  
 Their notes to music of the eternal spheres;  
 But when I was aware of the sweet chord  
 Of their compassion, more than if they spoke 95  
 Saying, "Lady, why this shame upon him poured?"  
 The ice that round my heart had hardened woke  
 Warm into breath and water, and from my breast  
 In anguish, through mouth and through eyes, outbroke.  
 She, standing ever in her still'd arrest 100  
 Upon the car's same side, to the array  
 Of those compassionate beings these words address:  
 "Ye so keep watch in the everlasting day  
 That neither night stealeth from you, nor sleep,  
 One step that the world takes upon its way; 105  
 Therefore my answer shall the more care keep  
 That he, there, understand me amid those tears,  
 So that transgression equal sorrow reap.

83-84. Ps. 31: "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust." Verse 8 ends with: "Thou hast set my feet in a large room."

85. "The chine of Italy" is the Apennine range.

89. "The shadeless countries": the African desert.



Not only by operation of great spheres  
 Which to some certain end each seed uptrain 110  
 According as the starry voice it hears,  
 But bounty of heavenly graces, which for rain  
 Have exhalations born in place so high  
 That our eyes may not near to them attain,  
 This man was such in natural potency, 115  
 In his new life, that all the ingrained good  
 Looked in him to have fruited wondrously.  
 But so much groweth the more rank and rude  
 The soil with bad seed and unhusbanded,  
 The more it hath from earth of hardihood. 120  
 His spirit some time my countenance comforted  
 With look of my young eyes for its support,  
 Drawing him, the right path with me to tread.  
 Soon as the threshold I had passed, athwart  
 The second period, and life changed its home, 125  
 Me he forsook, with others to consort.  
 When from the flesh to spirit I had clomb  
 And beauty and virtue greater in me grew,  
 Less dear to him, more strange did I become;  
 And with perverted steps on ways untrue 130  
 He sought false images of good, that ne'er  
 Perform entire the promise that was due.  
 Nor helped me the inspiration won by prayer  
 Whereby through dream or other hidden accost  
 I called him back; so little had he care. 135  
 So low he sank, all means must I exhaust,  
 Till naught for his salvation profited  
 Save to be shown the people that are lost.  
 For this I broached the gateway of the dead,  
 For this with tears was my entreaty brought 140  
 To him, by whom his feet were hither led.  
 The ordinance of high God were set at naught  
 If Lethe were passed over into peace,  
 And such viand enjoyed, without some scot  
 Of penitence that may the tears release." 145

## CANTO XXXI

[Dante, accused by Beatrice, confesses his sin and is filled with penitence. Overwhelmed by the severity of Beatrice's words, and by

109-112. The "great spheres" are the revolving heavens, which determine the disposition of every human being. God also bestows upon every individual a special degree of grace.

116. "New life": young life.

125. "The second period": begins at 25. Her "life changed" the temporal home for the eternal.

his own remorse, he falls senseless. When he recovers from his faint, he finds that Matilda is drawing him across Lethe stream, in which she immerses him. The four dancers (the four cardinal virtues) lead him up to the Gryphon [who represents Christ, the second person of the Trinity—J. C. McG.], where Beatrice is standing; in her eyes the Gryphon is mirrored, now in one form now in the other. The other three (the Theological Virtues) then come forward, dancing, and implore Beatrice to smile upon her faithful servant.]

"O thou who art yon-side the sacred stream,"  
 Turning her speech to point at me the blade  
 Which even the edge had made so sharp to seem,  
 She spoke again, continuing undelayed.  
 "Say, say if this be true; for, thus accused,  
 Confession must thereto by thee be made" 5  
 Whereat my faculties were so confused  
 That the voice stirred and faltered and was dead  
 Ere it came free of the organs that it used.  
 Short time she endured; "What think'st thou?" then she  
 said. 10  
 "Answer, for in thee the sad memories  
 By the water are not yet discomfited."  
 Fear and confusion's mingled miseries  
 Constrained out of my mouth a "Yes" so low  
 That to understand it there was need of eyes. 15  
 As the arbalest that snaps both string and bow,  
 When to a too great tautness it is forced,  
 And shooting hits the mark with feebler blow,  
 So under this so heavy charge I burst,  
 Out of me letting gush the sighs and tears; 20  
 And in its vent my voice failed as from thirst.  
 Wherefore she questioned: "Within those desires  
 I stirred in thee, to make thee love the Good  
 Beyond which nought is, whereto man aspires,  
 What moats or what strong chains athwart thy road 25  
 Didst thou encounter, that of hope to pass  
 Onward, thou needs must strip thee as of a load?  
 And what solace or profit in the face  
 Of the others was displayed unto thine eye  
 That thou before them up and down must pace?" 30  
 After the drawing of a bitter sigh  
 Scarce had I voice an answer to essay,  
 And lips with difficulty shaped reply.  
 Weeping I said: "Things of the passing day,

Soon as your face no longer on me shone, 35  
 With their false pleasure turned my steps away."  
 And she: "If thou wert silent, nor didst own  
 What thou avowest, not less were record  
 Of thy fault made: by such a judge 'tis known.  
 But when the sinner's own mouth has outpoured 40  
 The accusation, in our court the wheel  
 Against the edge is turned back on the sword.  
 Howbeit, that now the shame thou carry still  
 For thine error, and at the Siren's plea  
 Another time thou be of stronger will, 45  
 Lay aside the seed of weeping; hark to me.  
 Hear how my buried body should have spurred  
 And on the opposite path have furthered thee.  
 Nature or art never to thee assured  
 Such pleasure as the fair limbs that did house 50  
 My spirit, and now are scattered and interred.  
 And if the highest pleasure failed thee thus  
 By my death, at such time what mortal thing  
 Ought to have drawn thee toward it amorous?  
 Truly oughtest thou at the first arrow's sting 55  
 Of those lures, to rise after me on high,  
 Who was no more made in such fashioning.  
 Nay, nor should girl or other vanity  
 Of such brief usage have thy wings down-weighed  
 To wait for other coming shafts to fly. 60  
 'The young bird waiteth two or three indeed;  
 But in the eyes of the full-fledged in vain  
 The net is spread and the arrows vainly speed."  
 As boys that dumb with shamefastness remain,  
 Eyes to ground, listening to their faults rehearsed, 65  
 Knowing themselves in penitence and pain,  
 So stood I; and she said: "From what thou hear'st  
 If thou art grieving, lift thy beard and look,  
 And thou shalt by a greater grief be pierced."  
 With less resistance is a stubborn oak 70  
 Torn up by wind (whether 'twas ours that blew  
 Or wind that from Iarbas' land awoke)  
 Than at her bidding I my chin up-drew;  
 And when by "beard" she asked me for my face,  
 The venom in the meaning well I knew. 75

41-42. The sword of justice is blunted, i.e., tempered with mercy.

58. Is the "girl" to be taken literally, or does she symbolize some intellectual pursuit inconsistent with the spiritual ideal? The question remains open.

68. "Beard": chin.

72. "Iarbas" was king of Libya.

75. The implication that the beard is inconsistent with Dante's youthful vagaries.

And when to expose my features I could brace  
 My spirit, I saw those primal Essences  
 Reposing from their strewings in their place.  
 And mine eyes, hardly as yet assured of these,  
 Were 'ware of Beatrice, turned toward that beast 80  
 Which in two natures one sole person is.  
 Under her veil beyond the stream I wist  
 That she surpassed her ancient self yet more  
 Than when amongst us she surpassed the rest.  
 The nettle of penitence pricked me now so sore 85  
 That, of all things, that which did most pervert  
 To love of it, I had most hatred for.  
 The recognition gnawed so at my heart  
 That I fell conquered, and what then of me  
 Became, she knows who had devised the smart. 90  
 Then when my heart restored the faculty  
 Of sense, the lady I had found alone  
 I saw above me, and "Hold," she said, "hold me."  
 To the neck into the stream she had led me on  
 And, drawing me behind her, went as light 95  
 Over the water as a shuttle thrown.  
 When I was near the bank of blessed sight  
*Asperges me* my cars so sweetly graced  
 I cannot recollect it, far less write.  
 The fair lady opened her arms, embraced 100  
 My head, and plunged me underneath the flow,  
 Where swallowing I must needs the water taste,  
 Then raised me and presented me, bathed so,  
 Within the dancing of the beauteous Four;  
 And each an arm about me came to throw. 105  
 "Here we are nymphs, in the sky stars: before  
 Beatrice descended to the world, we were  
 Ordained to be her handmaids evermore.  
 We'll lead thee to her eyes; but the Three there,  
 Whose gaze is deeper, in the blissful light 110  
 That is within, shall make thine own more clear."  
 Thus singing they began, and me then right  
 Up to the Gryphon's breast with them they led  
 Where Beatrice was standing opposite.  
 "See that thou spare not of thy gaze," they said. 115  
 "We have set thee afore the emeralds to stand

77. "Primal Essences": the angels.

80. "That beast": the Gryphon.

92. "The lady": Matilda.

98. "Purge me": Ps. 51:7.

104. "The beauteous Four": the

cardinal virtues.

109. "The Three": the theological virtues.

116. "The emeralds": the eyes of Beatrice.

Wherefrom for thee Love once his armoury fed."  
 Thousand desires, hotter than flame, constrained  
 The gaze of mine eyes to the shining eyes  
 Which on the Gryphon only fixed remained. 120  
 As in the glass the sun, not otherwise  
 The two-fold creature had its mirroring  
 Within them, now in one, now the other guise.  
 Think, Reader, if I marvelled at this thing,  
 When I beheld it unchanged as at first 125  
 Itself, and in its image altering.  
 While in deep astonishment immersed  
 My happy soul was tasting of that food  
 Which, itself sating, of itself makes thirst,  
 Showing themselves as if of loftiest blood 130  
 In their demeanour, the other three came then  
 Dancing to the angelic air they trod.  
 "Turn, Beatrice, turn thy sainted eyes again,"  
 So were they singing, "to thy servant leal  
 Who to see thee so many steps hath ta'en. 135  
 Of thy grace do us this grace, to unveil  
 To him thy mouth, so that he may discern  
 The second beauty which thou dost conceal."  
 O splendour of the living light eterne,  
 Who is there that beneath Parnassus' shade 140  
 Has grown pale or has drunk of that cistern  
 That would not seem to have his mind o'er-weighed  
 Striving to paint thee as thou appeared'st where  
 To figure thee, heaven's harmonics are made,  
 When thou didst unveil to the open air? 145

*Paradise (Paradiso)*

CANTO I

[The poet invokes the aid of Apollo in attempting the hardest part of his theme, the description of Paradise.

On earth, in Italy, it is evening; but at the summit of the Mount of Purgatory it is near noon about the time of the vernal equinox; the sun being in Aries, a propitious conjunction. Dante and Beatrice are suddenly transported to the sphere of fire, between the earth and the moon. Dante is so "transhumanized" that he is now able to hear the music of the spheres; but at first he is bewildered, not understanding, till Beatrice explains that he has left the earth behind. He is still puzzled to know how it is that he has risen, more swiftly

123. Now with its human, now with its divine, bearing—the two component parts of the nature of Christ.

138. "The second beauty" is the mouth, the first beauty being the eyes.

than air or fire, against the laws of gravitation. Beatrice tells him that the instinct implanted in the soul is to rise, as fire rises, towards heaven; this belongs to the order of the universe, in which each part has its own function. Dante has been liberated from the distractions which, through man's possession of free will, sometimes cause the soul to be diverted from its aim.]

The glory of Him who moveth all that is  
 Pervades the universe, and glows more bright  
 In the one region, and in another less.  
 In that heaven which partakes most of His light  
 I have been, and have beheld such things as who 5  
 Comes down thence has no wit nor power to write;  
 Such depth our understanding deepens to  
 When it draws near unto its longing's home  
 That memory cannot backward with it go.  
 Nevertheless what of the blest kingdom 10  
 Could in my memory, for its treasure, stay  
 Shall now the matter of my song become.  
 For the last labour, good Apollo, I pray,  
 Make me so apt a vessel of thy power  
 As is required for gift of thy loved bay. 15  
 One of Parnassus' peaks hath heretofore  
 Sufficed me; both now shall I need forthwith  
 For entering on the last arena-floor.  
 Enter into my bosom, and in-breathe  
 Such force as filled thee to out-sing the strain 20  
 Of Marsyas when thou didst his limbs unsheathe.  
 O divinc power, if thou so far sustain,  
 That I may show the image visibly  
 Of the holy realm imprinted on my brain,  
 Thou'lt see me come to thy beloved tree 25  
 And there the leaves upon my temples fit  
 Which I shall earn both through the theme and thee.  
 So few times, Father, is there plucked of it  
 For Caesar or for poet triumphing  
 (Fault and reproach of human will and wit), 30  
 That in the joyous Delphic god must spring  
 A joy new-born, when the Peneian frond  
 With longing for itself doth any sting.  
 A small spark kindles a great flame beyond:  
 Haply after me with better voice than mine 35

15. "Loved bay": Daphne, loved and pursued by Apollo, was changed to a laurel.

21. "Marsyas": a satyr, who was de-

feated and then flayed by Apollo.

25. "Thy beloved tree": the laurel.

31-32. "The joyous Delphic god": Apollo. "The Peneian frond": the laurel.

Such prayer shall plead, that Cirrha may respond.  
 The world's lamp rises upon men to shine  
 By divers gates, but from that gate which makes  
 Four circles with three crosses to conjoin,  
 With happier star joined, happier course it takes, 40  
 And more to its own example can persuade,  
 Moulding and stamping it, the mundane wax.  
 Almost this gate had morning yonder made  
 And evening here; and there that hemisphere  
 Was all white, and the other part in shade, 45  
 When, turned on her left side, I was aware  
 Of Beatrice, fixing on the sun her eyes:  
 Never on it so fixed was eagle's stare.  
 And as a second ray will always rise  
 Where the first struck, and backward seek ascent, 50  
 Like pilgrim hastening when he homeward lies,  
 So into my imagination went  
 Through the eyes her gesture; and my own compelled,  
 And on the sun, past wont, my eyes were bent.  
 Much is permitted there which is denied 55  
 Here to our faculties, thanks to the place  
 Made for mankind to own, and there abide.  
 Not long I endured him, yet not so brief space  
 But that I saw what sparkles round him shone  
 Like molten ore fresh from the fierce furnace; 60  
 And, on a sudden, day seemed added on  
 To day, as if He, who such things can do,  
 Had glorified heaven with a second sun.  
 Beatrice was standing and held full in view  
 The eternal wheels, and I fixed on her keen 65  
 My eyes, that from above their gaze withdrew.  
 And at her aspect I became within  
 As Glaucus after the herb's tasting, whence  
 To the other sea-gods he was made akin.  
 The passing beyond bounds of human sense 70  
 Words cannot tell; let then the examples sate  
 Him for whom grace reserves the experience.

36. "Cirrha" stands for Delphi, Apollo's abode.

37-44. In these lines Dante describes the season. [The "gate" is the point of the horizon from which the sun rises on a particular day. On this day (Wednesday, April 13, 1300) it was still in the zodiacal sign Aries (March 21-April 21). On the day the sun enters Aries, three circles—the celestial equator, the ecliptic, and the colure of the equinoxes—intersect the horizon (itself

a circle); hence, four circles and three crosses. It was believed that the sun's influence was most favorable when it was in Aries.—J. C. McG.]

44-45. Here Dante tells the hour: it was noon in Eden, midnight in Jerusalem.

56. "Thanks to the place": Eden.

65 "The eternal wheels": the revolving heavens.

68. The fisherman Glaucus, tasting of a certain herb, became a sea-god.

If I was only what thou didst create  
 Last in me, O Love whose rule the heavens attest,  
 Thus know'st, who with thy light didst lift my state. 75  
 When that the wheel which thou eternizest  
 In longing, held me with the harmony  
 Which thou attunest and distinguishest,  
 So much of heaven was fired, it seemed to me,  
 With the sun's blaze that never river or rain 80  
 Widened the waters to so great a sea.  
 The new sound and the great light made me fain  
 With craving keener than had ever been  
 Before in me, their cause to ascertain.  
 She then, who saw me as I myself within, 85  
 My mind's disturbance eager to remit,  
 Opened her lips before I could begin,  
 And spoke: "Thou makest thyself dense of wit  
 With false fancy, so that thou dost not see  
 What thou would'st see, wert thou but rid of it. 90  
 Thou'rt not on earth, as thou supposest thee:  
 But lightning from its own place rushing out  
 Ne'er sped as thou, who to thy home dost flee."  
 If I was stript of my first teasing doubt  
 By the brief smiling little words, yet freed 95  
 I was not, but enmeshed in a new thought.  
 And I replied: "I am released indeed  
 From much amazement; yet am still amazed  
 That those light bodies I transcend in speed."  
 She, sighing in pity, gave me as she gazed 100  
 The look that by a mother is bestowed  
 Upon her child in its delirium crazed,  
 And said: "All things, whatever their abode,  
 Have order among themselves; this Form it is  
 'That makes the universe like unto God. 105  
 Here the high beings see the imprint of His  
 Eternal power, which is the goal divine  
 Whereto the rule aforesaid testifies.  
 In the order I speak of, all natures incline  
 Either more near or less near to their source 110  
 According as their diverse lots assign.  
 To diverse harbours thus they move perforce  
 O'er the great ocean of being, and each one

73. Dante is not sure whether he took his body with him to Heaven, or left it behind.

77. The swift motion of the *Primum Mobile*, the outermost sphere of the material universe, is due to the

eagerness of every one of its parts to come into contact with every part of God's own Heaven, the *Empyrean*.

93. "Thy home": the *Empyrean*.

110. "Their source": God.



With instinct given it to maintain its course.  
 This bears the fiery element to the moon; 115  
 This makes the heart of mortal things to move;  
 This knits the earth together into one.  
 Not only creatures that are empty of  
 Intelligence this bow shoots towards the goal,  
 But those that have both intellect and love. 120  
 The Providence, that rules this wondrous whole,  
 With its own light makes the heaven still to stay  
 Wherein whirls that which doth the swiftest roll.  
 And thither now upon the appointed way  
 We are borne on by virtue of that cord still 125  
 Which means a joyful mark, shoot what it may.  
 True it is that as the form oftentimes ill  
 Accordeth with the intention of the art,  
 The matter being slow to serve the will,  
 So aside sometimes may the creature start; 130  
 For it has power, though on this course impelled,  
 To swerve in purpose toward some other part  
 (And so the fire from cloud may be beheld  
 To fall), if the first impulse of its flight  
 To earth be wrested, by false pleasure held. 135  
 Thou should'st not marvel, if I esteem aright,  
 More at thy rising than at streams we see  
 Fall to the base down from a mountain's height;  
 Marvel it were if thou, from hindrance free,  
 Had'st sat below, resolved there to remain, 140  
 As stillness in live flame on earth would be."  
 Thereon toward heaven she turned her gaze again.

CANTO III

[Dante becomes aware of faces appearing eager to speak to him. At first he supposes them to be reflections (unlike Narcissus, who supposed his reflection to be real). One of these spirits is Piccarda, about whom Dante had asked her brother Forese in Purgatory (Canto XXIV). She is with those placed in the sphere of the Moon because of vows broken or imperfectly performed. Dante asks if those who are in this lowest sphere ever crave for a more exalted place in Paradise. She tells him that this is impossible; it is of the essence of their bliss merely to fulfill the divine will: "In His will is our peace." And she goes on to tell how she took the veil in the Order of Saint Clare, but was forcibly taken from her convent (to

122-125. "The heaven": the Empyrean, within which the swift Primum Mobile revolves. "That cord": the

bowstring of instinct.

131. "For it has power": the free will.

be married to a noble). Among these spirits is the Empress Constance, who also was torn from her convent and married to Henry VI, the second of the three "whirlwinds" from Suabia (line 119); the first being Frederick Barbarossa, and the third Frederick II; all these emperors were men of tempestuous energy.]

That Sun which fired my bosom of old with love  
 Had thus bared for me in beauty the aspect sweet  
 Of truth, expert to prove as to disprove;  
 And I, to avow me of all error quit,  
 Confident and assured, lifted my head 5  
 More upright, in such measure as was fit.  
 But now appeared a sight that riveted  
 Me to itself with such compulsion keen  
 That my confession from my memory fled.  
 As from transparent glasses polished clean, 10  
 Or water shining smooth up to its rim,  
 Yet not so that the bottom is unseen,  
 Our faces' lineaments return so dim  
 That pearl upon white forehead not more slow  
 Would on our pupils its pale image limn; 15  
 So I beheld faces that seemed aglow  
 To speak, and fell into the counter-snare  
 From what made love 'twixt man and pool to grow.  
 No sooner had I marked those faces there,  
 Than, thinking them reflections, with swift eyes 20  
 I turned about to see of whom they were,  
 And saw nothing: again, in my surprise,  
 I turned straight to the light of my sweet Guide,  
 Who smiling, burned within her sainted eyes.  
 "Marvel not at my smiling," she replied, 25  
 "To contemplate thy childlike thought revealed  
 Which cannot yet its foot to truth confide,  
 But moves thee, as ever, on emptiness to build.  
 True substances are these thine eyes perceive,  
 Remitted here for vows not all fulfilled. 30  
 Speak with them therefore, hearken and believe,  
 For the true light which is their happiness  
 Lets them not swerve, but to it they must cleave."  
 And I to the shade that seemed most near to press  
 For converse, turned me and began, as one 35  
 Who is overwrought through longing in excess:  
 "O spirit made for bliss, who from the sun  
 Of life eternal feel'st the sweet ray

Which, save 'tis tasted, is conceived by none,  
 It will be gracious to me, if I may  
 Be gladdened with thy name and all your fate." 40  
 And she, with laughing eyes and no delay:  
 "Our charity no more locks up the gate  
 Against a just wish than that Charity  
 Which would have all its court in like estate. 45  
 On earth I was a Virgin Sister: see  
 What memory yields thee, and my being now  
 More beautiful will hide me not from thee,  
 But that I am Piccarda thou wilt know,  
 Who with these other blessed ones placed here 50  
 Am blessed in the sphere that moves most slow;  
 For our desires, which kindle and flame clear  
 Only in the pleasure of the Holy Ghost,  
 To what he appointeth joyfully adhere;  
 And this which seems to thee so lowly a post 55  
 Is given to us because the vows we made  
 Were broken, or complete observance lost."  
 Then I to her: "Something divinely glad  
 Shines in your marvellous aspect, to replace  
 In you the old conceptions that I had; 60  
 I was slow therefore to recall thy face:  
 But what thou tell'st me helpeth now to clear  
 My sight, and thee more easily to retrace.  
 But tell me: you that are made happy here,  
 Do ye to a more exalted place aspire, 65  
 To see more, or to make yourselves more dear?"  
 She smiled a little, and with her smiled that choir  
 Of spirits; then so joyous she replied  
 That she appeared to burn in love's first fire:  
 "Brother, the virtue of love hath pacified 70  
 Our will; we long for what we have alone,  
 Nor any craving stirs in us beside.  
 If we desired to reach a loftier zone,  
 Our longings would be all out of accord  
 With His will who disposeth here His own. 75  
 For that, these circles, thou wilt see, afford  
 No room, if love be our whole being's root  
 And thou ponder the meaning of that word.  
 Nay, 'tis of the essence of our blessed lot  
 In the divine will to be cloistered still 80  
 Through which our own wills into one are wrought,

44. "That Charity": of God.

[59-61. *Your* refers to the wholecompany; *thy* refers to Piccarda alone.

—J. C. McG.]

Had look and love all on the one mark bent.  
 O triple Light, which in a single star  
 Shining on them their joy can so expand,  
 Look down upon this storm wherein we are! 30  
 If the barbarian, coming from such land  
 As every day by wheeling Helice  
 And her belovèd son with her, is spanned,  
 Seeing Rome and her stupendous works,—if he  
 Was dazed, in that age when the Lateran 35  
 Rose, builded to outsoar mortality,  
 I, who was come to the divine from man,  
 To the eternal out of time, and from  
 Florence unto a people just and sane,  
 How dazed past measure must I needs become! 40  
 Between this and my joy I found it good,  
 Truly, to hear naught and myself be dumb.  
 And as the pilgrim quickens in his blood  
 Within the temple of his vow at gaze,  
 Already in hope to re-tell how it stood, 45  
 So traversing the light of living rays  
 My eyes along the ranks, now up I led,  
 Now down, and now wandered in circling ways.  
 I saw faces, such as to love persuade,  
 Adorned by their own smile and Other's light 50  
 And gestures that all dignity displayed.  
 The general form of Paradise my sight  
 Had apprehended in its ambience,  
 But upon no part had it rested quite;  
 I turned then with a wish re-kindled thence 55  
 To ask my Lady and to be satisfied  
 Concerning things which held me in suspense.  
 One thing I thought, another one replied:  
 I thought to have seen Beatrice, and behold!  
 An elder, robed like to those glorified. 60  
 His eyes and cheeks of benign gladness told,  
 And in his bearing was a kindliness  
 Such as befits a father tender-souled:  
 "Where is she?" I cried on a sudden in my distress.  
 "To end thy longing, Beatrice was stirred," 65  
 He answered then, "to bring me from my place.  
 Her shalt thou see, if to the circle third

31-33. "Such land": the North.  
 "Helice" and "her . . . son" Arcas  
 are the Great and the Little Bear.

35. "The Lateran": the old Papal  
 palace in Rome.

60. "An elder": St. Bernard, a  
 great mystic of the twelfth century,  
 famous for his devotion to the Blessed  
 Virgin.

67. The first circle is that of Mary,

From the highest rank thine eyes thou wilt up-raise,  
 There on the throne whereto she hath been preferred."  
 Without reply I lifted up my gaze 70  
 And saw her making for herself a crown  
 Of the reflection from the eternal rays.  
 From the highest sky which rolls the thunder down  
 No mortal eye is stationed so remote,  
 Though in the deepest of the seas it drown, 75  
 As then from Beatrice was my sight; but naught  
 It was to me; for without any veil  
 Her image down to me undimmed was brought.  
 "O Lady, in whom my hopes all prosper well,  
 And who for my salvation didst endure 80  
 To leave the printing of thy feet in Hell,  
 Of all that I have seen, now and before,  
 By virtue of what thy might and goodness gave,  
 I recognize the grace and sovereign power.  
 Thou hast drawn me up to freedom from a slave 85  
 By all those paths, all those ways known to thee  
 Through which thou had'st such potency to save.  
 Continue thy magnificence in me,  
 So that my soul, which thou hast healed of scar,  
 May please thy sight when from the body free." 90  
 So did I pray; and she, removed so far  
 As she appeared, looked on me smiling-faced;  
 'Then to the eternal fountain turned her there.  
 Whereon the holy Elder: "That thou may'st  
 Consummate this thy journey, whereunto 95  
 Prayer and a holy love made me to haste,  
 Fly with thine eyes this heavenly garden through!  
 Gazing on it shall better qualify  
 Thy vision, the light upward to pursue.  
 The Queen of Heaven, for whom continually 100  
 I burn with love, will grant us every grace  
 Since Bernard, her own faithful one, am I."  
 Like one, some Croat perhaps, who comes to gaze  
 On our Veronica with eyes devout,  
 Nor states the inveterate hunger that he has, 105  
 So long as it is shown, but says in thought,  
 "My Lord Christ Jesus, very God, is this  
 Indeed Thy likeness in such fashion wrought?"

the second that of Eve, the third that of Rachel, beside whom Beatrice sits.

96. The "prayer and a holy love" are Beatrice's.

104. The "Veronica" is the true image of the Savior, left on a kerchief. It was shown at St. Peter's in Rome.

Such was I, gazing on the impassioned bliss  
 Of love in him who even in this world's woe 110  
 By contemplation tasted of that peace.  
 "Child of Grace," he began, "thou wilt not know  
 This joyous being in its felicity  
 If thine eyes rest but on the base below.  
 Look on the farthest circles thou can'st see, 115  
 Till thou perceive enthroned the Queen, to whom  
 This realm devoteth its whole fealty."  
 I raised my eyes; and as in morning bloom  
 The horizon's eastern part becometh bright  
 And that where the sun sinks is overcome, 120  
 So with my eyes climbing a mountain's height,  
 As from a valley, I saw on the utmost verge  
 What outshone all else fronting me in light.  
 As that point where the car is to emerge,  
 Which Phaëthon drove ill, glows fiercest 125  
 And softens down its flame on either marge,  
 So did that oriflamme of peace attest  
 The midmost glory, and on either side  
 In equal measure did its rays arrest.  
 And at that mid-point, with wings opened wide, 130  
 A myriad angels moved in festive play,  
 In brilliance and in art diversified.  
 There, smiling upon dance and roundelay,  
 I saw a Beauty, that was happiness  
 In the eyes of all the other saints' array. 135  
 And if in speaking I had wealth not less  
 Than in imagining, I would not dare  
 To attempt the least part of her loveliness.  
 When of my fixt look Bernard was aware,  
 So fastened on his own devotion's flame, 140  
 He turned his eyes with so much love to her  
 That mine more ardent and absorbed became.

## CANTO XXXII

[Bernard explains the conformation of the Celestial Rose. It is divided down the middle, and across; on one side are male, on the other female, saints. Below the horizontal division are the souls of beatified children. That Dante may be vouchsafed a vision of Deity itself, Bernard makes supplication to the Virgin, and bids Dante accompany him in his prayer.]

111. St. Bernard in his meditations had a foretaste of the peace of Heaven.

124. "The car": of the sun.

127. "That oriflamme," i.e., golden pennant, is the streak of light on Mary's side.

141. "To her": on Mary.

Rapt in love's bliss, that contemplative saint  
 Nevertheless took up the instructor's part,  
 Uttering these sacred words with no constraint:  
 "The wound that Mary closed, and soothed its smart,  
 She, who so beautiful sits at her feet, 5  
 Opened, and yet more deeply pressed the dart.  
 In the order making the third rank complete  
 Rachel thou can'st distinguish next below  
 With Beatrice in her appointed seat.  
 Sara, Rebecca, Judith, and her too, 10  
 Ancestress of the singer, whose cry rose  
*Miserere mei* for his fault and rue,—  
 These thou beholdest tier by tier disclose,  
 Descending, as I name them each by name,  
 From petal after petal down the Rose. 15  
 And from the seventh grade downward, following them,  
 Even as above them, Hebrew women bide,  
 Parting the tresses on the Rose's stem;  
 Because, according as faith made confide  
 In Christ, these serve as for a party-wall 20  
 At which the stairs of sanctity divide.  
 On this side, where the flower is filled in all  
 Its numbered petals, sit in order they  
 Who waiting on Christ Coming heard His call;  
 On the other side, where certain gaps betray 25  
 Seats empty, in semicircle, thou look'st on  
 Such as in Christ Come had their only stay.  
 And as on the one side the glorious throne  
 Of the Lady of Heaven and the other thrones as well  
 Below it make partition, so great John 30  
 Sits over against her, ever there to dwell,  
 Who, ever holy, endured the desert's fare,  
 And martyrdom, and then two years in Hell.  
 Beneath him, chosen to mark the boundary there  
 Francis and Benedict and Augustine shine 35  
 And others, round by round, down even to here.  
 Now marvel at the deep foresight divine!  
 For the faith's either aspect, equal made,  
 Shall consummate this garden's full design.  
 And know that downward from the midmost grade 40

4-5. "The wound": of original sin. "She": Eve.

11. "Ancestress": Ruth; "the singer": David.

12. "*Miserere mei*": "Have mercy upon me."

19. On one side of the partition are

the Hebrews (line 24), on the other the Christians (line 27).

[30. *John*: John the Baptist—J. C. McG.]

33. "In Hell": the Limbus.

38. "Either aspect": the Old Church and the New.

Which runneth the two companics betwixt  
 They sit there by no merit that they had  
 But by another's, on conditions fixt;  
 For these are spirits that were all released  
 Ere they had made a true choice, unperplext. 45  
 And by their faces this is manifest  
 And also by their voices' childish note,  
 If looking heedfully thou listenest.  
 Now thou art doubting, and doubt makes thee mute;  
 But for thy sake will I the coil undo 50  
 Wherein thou art bound by subtlety of thought.  
 Within this kingdom's compass thou must know  
 Chance hath no single point's determining,  
 No more than thirst, or hunger, or sorrow,  
 Because eternal law, in everything 55  
 Thou see'st, it stablisht with such close consent  
 As close upon the finger fits the ring;  
 Wherefore these children, hastened as they went  
 Into the true life, are not without cause  
 Within themselves more and less excellent. 60  
 The King, through whom this realm hath its repose  
 In so great love and such felicities,  
 That no rash will on further venture goes,  
 Creating all minds in His own eyes' bliss,  
 At His own pleasure dowers them with grace 65  
 Diversely; on this point let the fact suffice.  
 This is made known to you, clear and express,  
 In Holy Writ, by those twins who, ere birth,  
 In the womb wrestled in their wrathfulness.  
 According to the colour figuring forth 70  
 In the hair such grace, the sublime Light must needs  
 Chaplet their heads according to their worth.  
 Wherefore without reward for any deeds  
 Their places are to different ranks assigned,  
 Differing only in what from gift proceeds. 75  
 In the early ages parents' faith, combined  
 With innocence, sufficed and nothing more  
 To wing them upward and salvation find.  
 The first age being completed, other power  
 Was needed for the innocent males to attain 80  
 By virtue of circumcision, Heaven's door.

43-45. "But by another's": one's parents. "Released": from the flesh. These are the spirits of children who died before the age of moral responsibility.

49. Dante is wondering why some have higher seats than others. He learns

that the degree of beatitude is determined by predestination.

68. "Those twins": Jacob and Esau. 70-72. Our halo in Heaven is proportionate to the grace bestowed on us at birth.



But when the time of grace began its reign,  
 Having not perfect baptism of Christ,  
 Such innocence below there must remain.  
 Look now upon the face most like to Christ! 85  
 For only its radiance can so fortify  
 Thy gaze as fitteth for beholding Christ."  
 I saw rain over her such ecstasy  
 Brought in the sacred minds that with it glowed—  
 Created through the heavenly height to fly— 90  
 That all I had seen on all the way I had trod  
 Held me not in such breathless marvelling  
 Nor so great likeness vouched to me of God.  
 And that Love which at its first down-coming  
 Sang to her: "Hail, O Mary, full of grace!" 95  
 Now over her extended either wing.  
 The divine song echoed through all the space,  
 Answered from all sides of the Blessed Court  
 So that clearer joy filled every face.  
 "O holy father, who for my comfort 100  
 Hast digned thy sweet allotted place to quit,  
 With me in this low station to consort,  
 What is that angel who with such delight.  
 Looketh our Queen in the eyes, lost in love there  
 So that he seems one flame of living light?" 105  
 To his instruction thus did I repair  
 Once more, who drew from Mary increasingly  
 Beauty, as from the sun the morning star.  
 "Blitheness and buoyant confidence," said he,  
 "As much as angel or a soul may own, 110  
 Are all in him; so would we have it be.  
 For he it is who brought the palm-leaf down  
 To Mary, when the burden of our woe  
 In flesh was undertaken by God's Son.  
 Now with thine eyes come with me, as I go 115  
 Discoursing, and the great patricians note  
 Of the empire that the just and pious know.  
 Those two above, most blessed in their lot  
 By being nearest to the august Empress,  
 Are of our rose as 'twere the double root. 120  
 He on the left who has the nearest place  
 Is that father, through whose presumptuous taste  
 The human tribe tasteth such bitterness.  
 That ancient Father of Holy Church thou may'st

84. "Below there": in the Limbus. 119. "Empress": Mary.  
 89. "The sacred minds": the angels. 122-124. "That father": Adam.  
 94. "That Love which . . .": the "That ancient Father": St. Peter.  
 angel Gabriel.

See on the right, to whom Christ gave in trust 125  
 The keys of this, of all flowers loveliest.  
 And he who, ere he died, saw all the host  
 Of grievous days prepared for that fair spouse  
 Won by the nails and by the lance's thrust,  
 Sits by him; by the other, see repose 130  
 That leader under whom was fed by manna  
 The ungrateful people, fickle and mutinous.  
 And, sitting over against Peter, Anna  
 Looks on her daughter, so content of soul,  
 She moveth not her eyes, singing Hosanna; 135  
 And opposite the greatest father of all  
 Sits Lucy, who stirred the lady of thy troth,  
 When, eyes down, thou wert running to thy fall.  
 But stop we here as the good tailor doth  
 (Since of thy sleeping vision the time flies), 140  
 Cutting the gown according to the cloth;  
 And turn we to the Primal Love our eyes,  
 So that, still gazing toward Him, thou may'st pierce  
 Into His splendour, far as in thee lies.  
 Yet, lest it happen that thou should'st reverse, 145  
 Thinking to advance, the motion of thy wing,  
 A prayer for grace needs must we now rehearse,  
 Grace from her bounty who can the succour bring.  
 And do thou with thy feeling follow on  
 My words, that close to them thy heart may cling." 150  
 And he began this holy orison.

## CANTO XXXIII

[The prayer of St. Bernard to the Virgin Mary. The prayer is granted; and then Dante prays to God that some trace of the dazzling glimpse of the divine mystery of Trinity in Unity may be communicated to men through his verse.]

"Maiden and Mother, daughter of thine own Son,  
 Beyond all creatures lowly and lifted high,  
 Of the Eternal Design the corner-stone!  
 Thou art she who did man's substance glorify  
 So that its own Maker did not eschew 5

127-129. St. John, the author of the Apocalypse. "Spouse": the Church. "The nails and . . . the lance": of Christ's Passion.

130-131. "By him": Peter. "By the other": Adam. "That leader": Moses.

133. "Anna": St. Anna, mother of Mary.

137. [*Lucy*: St. Lucia; see Canto II of the *Inferno*.—J. C. McG.] "The lady of thy troth": Beatrice.

148. "From her bounty": the Blessed Virgin's.

1. A great part of this beautiful prayer was copied by Chaucer in the Second Nun's Tale, 29-84.

Even to be made of its mortality.  
 Within thy womb the Love was kindled new  
 By generation of whose warmth supreme  
 This flower to bloom in peace eternal grew.  
 Here thou to us art the full noonday beam 10  
 Of love revealed: below, to mortal sight,  
 Hope, that forever springs in living stream.  
 Lady, thou art so great and hast such might  
 That whoso crave grace, nor to thee repair,  
 Their longing even without wing seeketh flight. 15  
 Thy charity doth not only him up-bear  
 Who prays, but in thy bounty's large excess  
 Thou oftentimes dost even forerun the prayer.  
 In thee is pity, in thee is tenderness,  
 In thee magnificence, in thee the sum 20  
 Of all that in creation most can bless.  
 Now he that from the deepest pit hath come  
 Of the universe, and seen, each after each,  
 The spirits as they live and have their home,  
 He of thy grace so much power doth beseech 25  
 That he be enabled to uplift even higher  
 His eyes, and to the Final Goodness reach.  
 And I who never burned with more desire  
 For my own vision than for his, persist  
 In prayer to thee—my prayers go forth in choir, 30  
 May they not fail!—that thou disperse all mist  
 Of his mortality with prayers of thine,  
 Till joy be his of that supreme acquist.  
 Also I implore thee, Queen who can'st incline  
 All to thy will, let his affections stand 35  
 Whole and pure after vision so divine.  
 The throbbings of the heart do thou command!  
 See, Beatrice with how many of the blest,  
 To second this my prayer, lays hand to hand."  
 Those eyes, of God loved and revered, confest, 40  
 Still fixt upon him speaking, the delight  
 She hath in prayer from a devoted breast.  
 Then were they lifted to the eternal light,  
 Whercinto it may not be believed that eye  
 So clear in any creature sendeth sight. 45  
 And I, who to the goal was drawing nigh  
 Of all my longings, now, as it behoved,

9. "This flower": the Rose of the Blessed. 22. "He that . . .": Dante.

Felt the ardour of them in contentment die.  
 Bernard signed, smiling, as a hand he moved,  
 That I should lift my gaze up; but I knew 50  
 Myself already such as he approved,  
 Because my sight, becoming purged anew,  
 Deeper and deeper entered through the beam  
 Of sublime light, which in itself is true.  
 Thenceforth my vision was too great for theme 55  
 Of our speech, that such glory overbears,  
 And memory faints at such assault extreme.  
 As he who dreams sees, and when disappears  
 The dream, the passion of its print remains,  
 And naught else to the memory adheres, 60  
 Even such am I; for almost wholly wanes  
 My vision now, yet still the drops I feel  
 Of sweetness it distilled into my veins.  
 Even so the sunbeam doth the snow unscal;  
 So was the Sibyl's saying lost inert 65  
 Upon the thin leaves for the wind to steal.  
 O supreme Light, who dost thy glory assert  
 High over our imagining, lend again  
 Memory a little of what to me thou wert.  
 Vouchsafe unto my tongue such power to attain 70  
 That but one sparkle it may leave behind  
 Of thy magnificence to future men.  
 For by returning somewhat to my mind  
 And by a little sounding in this verse  
 More of thy triumph shall be thence divined. 75  
 So keenly did the living radiance pierce  
 Into me, that I think I had been undone  
 Had mine eyes faltered, from the light averse.  
 And I recall that with the more passion  
 I clove to it, till my gaze, thereat illumed, 80  
 With the Infinite Good tasted communion.  
 O Grace abounding, whereby I presumed  
 To fix upon the eternal light my gaze  
 So deep, that in it I my sight consumed!  
 I beheld leaves within the unfathomed blaze 85  
 Into one volume bound by love, the same  
 That the universe holds scattered through its maze.  
 Substance and accidents, and their modes, became  
 As if together fused, all in such wise

65. The Cumean "Sibyl" was accustomed to write her prophecies on loose tree-leaves.

84. I became blind to all else

86. God is the Book of the Universe.  
89. God, containing all things, is a perfect unit.

That what I speak of is one simple flame. 90  
 Verily I think I saw with mine own eyes  
 The form that knits the whole world, since I taste,  
 In telling of it, more abounding bliss.  
 One moment more oblivion has amassed  
 Than five-and-twenty centuries have wrought 95  
 Since Argo's shadow o'er wondering Neptune passed.  
 Thus did my mind in the suspense of thought  
 Gaze fixedly, all immovable and intent,  
 And ever fresh fire from its gazing caught.  
 Man at that light becometh so content 100  
 That to choose other sight and this reject,  
 It is impossible that he consent,  
 Because the good which is the will's object  
 Dwells wholly in it, and that within its pale  
 Is perfect, which, without, hath some defect. 105  
 Even for my remembrance now must fail  
 My words, and less than could an infant's store  
 Of speech, who at the pap yet sucks, avail;  
 Not that within the living light was more  
 Than one sole aspect of divine essence, 110  
 Being still forever as it was before,  
 But the one semblance, seen with more intense  
 A faculty, even as over me there stole  
 Change, was itself transfigured to my sense.  
 Within the clear profound Light's aureole 115  
 Three circles from its substance now appeared,  
 Of three colours, and each an equal whole.  
 One its reflection on the next conferred  
 As rainbow upon rainbow, and the two  
 Breathed equally the fire that was the third. 120  
 To my conception O how frail and few  
 My words! and that, to what I looked upon,  
 Is such that "little" is more than is its due.  
 O Light Eternal, who in thyself alone  
 Dwell'st and thyself know'st, and self-understood, 125  
 Self-understanding, smilest on thine own!  
 That circle which, as I conceived it, glowed  
 Within thee like reflection of a flame,  
 Being by mine eyes a little longer wooed,

[94-96. One moment caused Dante to forget more of his vision than Neptune, god of the sea, has forgotten—in the 2500 years that have elapsed since the first sea voyage—of his initial shock.—J. C. McG.]

115. The threefold oneness is disclosed by the symbol of three mysterious rings occupying exactly the same place.

120. "The third": the Holy Ghost, who emanates equally from Father and Son.

- Deep in itself, with colour still the same, 130  
 Seemed with our human effigy to fill,  
 Wherefore absorbed in it my sight became.  
 As the geometer who bends all his will  
 To measure the circle, and howsoe'er he try  
 Fails, for the principle escapes him still, 135  
 Such at this mystery new-disclosed was I,  
 Fain to understand how the image doth alight  
 Upon the circle, and with its form comply.  
 But these my wings were fledged not for that flight,  
 Save that my mind a sudden glory assailed 140  
 And its wish came revealed to it in that light.  
 To the high imagination force now failed;  
 But like to a wheel whose circling nothing jars  
 Already on my desire and will prevailed  
 The Love that moves the sun and the other stars. 145
134. The problem is the squaring of the circle.  
 143-145. Circular motion symbolizes
- faultless activity. Dante's individual will is merged in the World-Will of the Creator.

## GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

(1313-1375)

The Decameron\*

*The First Day*

In the year 1348 after the fruitful incarnation of the Son of God, that most beautiful of Italian cities, noble Florence, was attacked by deadly plague. It started in the East either through the influence of the heavenly bodies or because God's just anger with our wicked deeds sent it as a punishment to mortal men; and in a few years killed an innumerable quantity of people. Ceaselessly passing from place to place, it extended its miserable length over the West. Against this plague all human wisdom and foresight were vain. Orders had been given to cleanse the city of filth, the entry of any sick person was forbidden, much advice was given for keeping healthy; at the same time humble supplications were made to God by pious persons in processions and otherwise. And yet, in the beginning of the spring of the year mentioned, its horrible results began to appear, and in a miraculous manner. The symptoms were not the same as in the East, where a gush of blood from the nose was the plain sign of inevitable death; but it began both in men

\* Completed about 1353. The selections reprinted here are from the translation by Richard Aldington, in *The Decameron of Giovanni Boccaccio*, copy-

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and women with certain swellings in the groin or under the armpit. They grew to the size of a small apple or an egg, more or less, and were vulgarly called tumours. In a short space of time these tumours spread from the two parts named all over the body. Soon after this the symptoms changed and black or purple spots appeared on the arms or thighs or any other part of the body, sometimes a few large ones, sometimes many little ones. These spots were a certain sign of death, just as the original tumour had been and still remained.

No doctor's advice, no medicine could overcome or alleviate this disease. An enormous number of ignorant men and women set up as doctors in addition to those who were trained. Either the disease was such that no treatment was possible or the doctors were so ignorant that they did not know what caused it, and consequently could not administer the proper remedy. In any case very few recovered; most people died within about three days of the appearance of the tumours described above, most of them without any fever or any other symptoms.

The violence of this disease was such that the sick communicated it to the healthy who came near them, just as fire catches anything dry or oily near it. And it even went further. To speak to or go near the sick brought infection and a common death to the living; and moreover, to touch the clothes or anything else the sick had touched or worn gave the disease to the person touching.

What I am about to tell now is a marvelous thing to hear; and if I and others had not seen it with our own eyes I would not dare to write it, however much I was willing to believe and whatever the good faith of the person from whom I heard it. So violent was the malignancy of this plague that it was communicated, not only from one man to another, but from the garments of a sick or dead man to animals of another species, which caught the disease in that way and very quickly died of it. One day among other occasions I saw with my own eyes (as I said just now) the rags left lying in the street of a poor man who had died of the plague; two pigs came along and, as their habit is, turned the clothes over with their snouts and then munched at them, with the result that they both fell dead almost at once on the rags, as if they had been poisoned.

From these and similar or greater occurrences, such fear and fanciful notions took possession of the living that almost all of them adopted the same cruel policy, which was entirely to avoid the sick and everything belonging to them. By so doing, each one thought he would secure his own safety.

Some thought that moderate living and the avoidance of superfluity would preserve them from the epidemic. They formed small communities, living entirely separate from everybody else. They

shut themselves up in houses where there were no sick, eating the finest food and drinking the best wine very temperately, avoiding all excess, allowing no news or discussion of death and sickness, and passing the time in music and suchlike pleasures. Others thought just the opposite. They thought the sure cure for the plague was to drink and to be merry, to go about singing and amusing themselves, satisfying every appetite they could, laughing and jesting at what happened. They put their words into practise, spent day and night going from tavern to tavern, drinking immoderately, or went into other people's houses, doing only those things which pleased them. This they could easily do because everyone felt doomed and had abandoned his property, so that most houses became common property and any stranger who went in made use of them as if he had owned them. And with all this bestial behavior, they avoided the sick as much as possible.

In this suffering and misery of our city, the authority of human and divine laws almost disappeared, for, like other men, the ministers and the executors of the laws were all dead or sick or shut up with their families, so that no duties were carried out. Every man was therefore able to do as he pleased.

Many others adopted a course of life midway between the two just described. They did not restrict their victuals so much as the former, nor allow themselves to be drunken or dissolute like the latter, but satisfied their appetites moderately. They did not shut themselves up, but went about, carrying flowers or scented herbs or perfumes in their hands, in the belief that it was an excellent thing to comfort the brain with such odours; for the whole air was infected with the smell of dead bodies, of sick persons and medicines.

Others again held a still more cruel opinion, which they thought would keep them safe. They said that the only medicine against the plague-stricken was to go right away from them. Men and women, convinced of this and caring about nothing but themselves, abandoned their own city, their own houses, their dwellings, their relatives, their property, and went abroad or at least to the country round Florence, as if God's wrath in punishing men's wickedness with this plague would not follow them but strike only those who remained within the walls of the city, or as if they thought nobody in the city would remain alive and that its last hour had come.

Not everyone who adopted any of these various opinions died, nor did all escape. Some when they were still healthy had set the example of avoiding the sick, and, falling ill themselves, died untended.

One citizen avoided another, hardly any neighbour troubled about others, relatives never or hardly ever visited each other. Moreover,



such terror was struck into the hearts of men and women by this calamity, that brother abandoned brother, and the uncle his nephew, and the sister her brother, and very often the wife her husband. What is even worse and nearly incredible is that fathers and mothers refused to see and tend their children, as if they had not been theirs.

Thus, a multitude of sick men and women were left without any care except from the charity of friends (but these were few), or the greed of servants, though not many of these could be had even for high wages. Moreover, most of them were coarse-minded men and women, who did little more than bring the sick what they asked for or watch over them when they were dying. And very often these servants lost their lives and their earnings. Since the sick were thus abandoned by neighbours, relatives and friends, while servants were scarce, a habit sprang up which had never been heard of before. Beautiful and noble women, when they fell sick, did not scruple to take a young or old manservant, whoever he might be, and with no sort of shame, expose every part of their bodies to these men as if they had been women, for they were compelled by the necessity of their sickness to do so. This, perhaps, was a cause of looser morals in those women who survived.

In this way many people died who might have been saved if they had been looked after. Owing to the lack of attendants for the sick and the violence of the plague, such a multitude of people in the city died day and night that it was stupefying to hear of, let alone to see. From sheer necessity, then, several ancient customs were quite altered among the survivors.

The custom had been (as we still see it today), that women relatives and neighbours should gather at the house of the deceased, and there lament with the family. At the same time the men would gather at the door with the male neighbours and other citizens. Then came the clergy, few or many according to the dead person's rank; the coffin was placed on the shoulders of his friends and carried with funeral pomp of lighted candles and dirges to the church which the deceased had chosen before dying. But as the fury of the plague increased, this custom wholly or nearly disappeared, and new customs arose. Thus, people died, not only without having a number of women near them, but without a single witness. Very few indeed were honoured with the piteous laments and bitter tears of their relatives, who, on the contrary, spent their time in mirth, feasting and jesting. Even the women abandoned womanly pity and adopted this custom for their own safety. Few were they whose bodies were accompanied to church by more than ten or a dozen neighbours. Nor were these grave and honourable citizens but grave-diggers from the lowest of the people who got themselves

called sextons, and performed the task for money. They took up the bier and hurried it off, not to the church chosen by the deceased but to the church nearest, preceded by four or six of the clergy with few candles and often none at all. With the aid of the grave-diggers, the clergy huddled the bodies away in any grave they could find, without giving themselves the trouble of a long or solemn burial service.

The plight of the lower and most of the middle classes was even more pitiful to behold. Most of them remained in their houses, either through poverty or in hopes of safety, and fell sick by thousands. Since they received no care and attention, almost all of them died. Many ended their lives in the streets both at night and during the day; and many others who died in their houses were only known to be dead because the neighbours smelled their decaying bodies. Dead bodies filled every corner. Most of them were treated in the same manner by the survivors, who were more concerned to get rid of their rotting bodies than moved by charity towards the dead. With the aid of porters, if they could get them, they carried the bodies out of the houses and laid them at the doors, where every morning quantities of the dead might be seen. They then were laid on biers, or, as these were often lacking, on tables.

Often a single bier carried two or three bodies, and it happened frequently that a husband and wife, two or three brothers, or father and son were taken off on the same bier. It frequently happened that two priests, each carrying a cross, would go out followed by three or four biers carried by porters; and where the priests thought there was one person to bury, there would be six or eight, and often, even more. Nor were these dead honoured by tears and lighted candles and mourners, for things had reached such a pass that people cared no more for dead men than we care for dead goats. Thus it plainly appeared that what the wise had not learned to endure with patience through the few calamities of ordinary life, became a matter of indifference even to the most ignorant people through the greatness of this misfortune.

Such was the multitude of corpses brought to the churches every day and almost every hour that there was not enough consecrated ground to give them burial, especially since they wanted to bury each person in the family grave, according to the old custom. Although the cemeteries were full they were forced to dig huge trenches, where they buried the bodies by hundreds. Here they stowed them away like bales in the hold of a ship and covered them with a little earth, until the whole trench was full.

Not to pry any further into all the details of the miseries which afflicted our city, I shall add that the surrounding country was spared nothing of what befell Florence. The villages on a smaller scale

were like the city; in the fields and isolated farms the poor wretched peasants and their families were without doctors and any assistance, and perished in the highways, in their fields and houses, night and day, more like beasts than men. Just as the townsmen became dis-solute and indifferent to their work and property, so the peasants, when they saw that death was upon them, entirely neglected the future fruits of their past labours both from the earth and from cattle, and thought only of enjoying what they had. Thus it happened that cows, asses, sheep, goats, pigs, fowls and even dogs, those faithful companions of man, left the farms and wandered at their will through the fields, where the wheat crops stood abandoned, unreaped and ungarnered. Many of these animals seemed endowed with reason, for, after they had pastured all day, they returned to the farms for the night of their own free will, without being driven.

Returning from the country to the city, it may be said that such was the cruelty of Heaven, and perhaps in part of men, that between March and July more than one hundred thousand persons died within the walls of Florence, what between the violence of the plague and the abandonment in which the sick were left by the cowardice of the healthy. And before the plague it was not thought that the whole city held so many people.

Oh, what great palaces, how many fair houses and noble dwellings, once filled with attendants and nobles and ladies, were emptied to the meanest servant! How many famous names and vast possessions and renowned estates were left without an heir! How many gallant men and fair ladies and handsome youths, whom Galen, Hippocrates and Aesculapius themselves would have said were in perfect health, at noon dined with their relatives and friends, and at night supped with their ancestors in the next world!

But it fills me with sorrow to go over so many miseries. Therefore, since I want to pass over all I can leave out, I shall go on to say that when our city was in this condition and almost emptied of inhabitants, one Tuesday morning the venerable church of Santa Maria Novella had scarcely any congregation for divine service except (as I have heard from a person worthy of belief) seven young women in the mourning garments suitable to the times, who were all related by ties of blood, friendship or neighbourhood. None of them was older than twenty-eight or younger than eighteen; all were educated and of noble blood, fair to look upon, well-mannered and of graceful modesty.

I should tell you their real names if I had not a good reason for not doing so, which is that I would not have any of them blush in the future for the things they say and hearken to in the following pages. The laws are now strict again, whereas then, for the reasons

already shown, they were very lax, not only for persons of their age but for those much older. Nor would I give an opportunity to the envious (always ready to sneer at every praiseworthy life) to attack the virtue of these modest ladies with vulgar speech. But so that you may understand without confusion what each one says, I intend to give them names wholly or partly suitable to the qualities of each.

The first and eldest I shall call Pampinea, the second Fiammetta, the third Filomena, the fourth Emilia, the fifth Lauretta, the sixth Neifile, and the last Elisa (or "the virgin") for a very good reason. They met, not by arrangement, but by chance, in the same part of the church, and sat down in a circle. After many sighs they ceased to pray and began to talk about the state of affairs and other things. After a short space of silence, Pampinea said:

"Dear ladies, you must often have heard, as I have, that to make a sensible use of one's reason harms nobody. It is natural for everybody to aid, preserve and defend his life as far as possible. And this is so far admitted that to save their own lives men often kill others who have done no harm. If this is permitted by the laws which are concerned with the general good, it must certainly be lawful for us to take any reasonable means for the preservation of our lives. When I think of what we have been doing this morning and still more on former days, when I remember what we have been saying, I perceive and you must perceive that each of us goes in fear of her life. I do not wonder at this, but, since each of us has a woman's judgement, I do wonder that we do not seek some remedy against what we dread.

"In my opinion we remain here for no other purpose than to witness how many bodies are buried, or listen whether the friars here (themselves reduced almost to nothing) sing their offices at the canonical hours, or to display by our clothes the quantity and quality of our miseries to anyone who comes here. If we leave this church we see the bodies of the dead and the sick being carried about. Or we see those who had been exiled from the city by the authority of the laws for their crimes, deriding this authority because they know the guardians of the law are sick or dead, and running loose about the place. Or we see the dregs of the city batten- ing on our blood and calling themselves sextons, riding about on horseback in every direction and insulting our calamities with vile songs. On every side we hear nothing but 'So-and-so is dead' or 'So-and-so is dying.' And if there were anyone left to weep we should hear nothing but piteous lamentations. I do not know if it is the same in your homes as in mine. But if I go home there is nobody left there but one of my maids, which fills me with such horror that the hair stands upon my head. Wherever I go or sit at home I

seem to see the ghosts of the departed, not with the faces as I knew them but with dreadful looks which terrify me.

"I am ill at ease here and outside of here and at home; the more so since nobody who has the strength and ability to go away (as we have) now remains here, except ourselves. The few that remain (if there are any), according to what I see and hear, do anything which gives them pleasure or pleases their appetites, both by day and night, whether they are alone or in company, making no distinction between right and wrong. Not only laymen, but those cloistered in convents have broken their oaths and given themselves up to the delights of the flesh, and thus in trying to escape the plague by doing what they please, they have become lascivious and dissolute.

"If this is so (and we may plainly see it is) what are we doing here? What are we waiting for? What are we dreaming about? Are we less eager and active than other citizens in saving our lives? Are they less dear to us than to others? Or do we think that our lives are bound to our bodies with stronger chains than to other people's, and so believe that we need fear nothing which might harm us? We were and are deceived. How stupid we should be to believe such a thing! We may see the plainest proofs from the number of young men and women who have died of this cruel plague.

"I do not know if you think as I do, but in my opinion if we, through carelessness, do not want to fall into this calamity when we can escape it, I think we should do well to leave this town, just as many others have done and are doing. Let us avoid the wicked examples of others like death itself, and go and live virtuously in our country houses, of which each of us possesses several. There let us take what happiness and pleasure we can, without ever breaking the rules of reason in any manner.

"There we shall hear the birds sing, we shall see the green hills and valleys, the wheat-fields rolling like a sea, and all kinds of trees. We shall see the open Heavens which, although now angered against man, do not withhold from us their eternal beauties that are so much fairer to look upon than the empty walls of our city. The air will be fresher there, we shall find a greater plenty of those things necessary to life at this time, and fewer troubles. Although the peasants are dying like the townsmen, still, since the houses and inhabitants are fewer, we shall see less of them and feel less misery. On the other hand I believe we are not abandoning anybody here. Indeed we can truthfully say that we are abandoned, since our relatives have either died or fled from death and have left us alone in this calamity as if we were nothing to them.

"If we do what I suggest, no blame can fall upon us; if we fail

us here. I do not know what you are thinking of doing with your troubles here, but I dropped mine inside the gates of the city when I left it with you a little time ago. Therefore, either you must make up your minds to laugh and sing and amuse yourselves with me (that is, to the extent your dignity allows), or you must let me go back to my troubles and stay in the afflicted city."

Pampinea, who had driven away her woes in the same way, cheerfully replied:

"Dioneo, you speak well; let us amuse ourselves, for that was the reason why we fled from our sorrows. But when things are not organized they cannot long continue. And, since I began the discussion which brought this fair company together and since I wish our happiness to continue, I think it necessary that one of us should be made chief, whom the others will honour and obey, and whose duty shall be to regulate our pleasures. Now, so that everyone—both man and woman—may experience the cares as well as the pleasures of ruling and no one feel any envy at not sharing them, I think the weight and honour should be given to each of us in turn for one day. The first shall be elected by all of us. At vespers he or she shall choose the ruler for the next day, and so on. While their reigns last these rulers shall arrange where and how we are to spend our time."

These words pleased them all and they unanimously elected her for the first day. Filomena ran to a laurel bush, whose leaves she had always heard were most honourable in themselves and did great honour to anyone crowned with them, plucked off a few small branches and wove them into a fair garland of honour. When this was placed on the head of any one of them, it was a symbol of rule and authority over the rest so long as the party remained together.

Pampinea, thus elected queen, ordered silence. She then sent for the three servants of the young men and the four young women servants the ladies had brought, and said:

"To set a first example to you all (which may be bettered) and thus allow our gathering to live pleasantly and orderly and without shame and to last as long as we desire, I appoint Dioneo's servant Parmeno as my steward, and hand over to him the care of the whole family and of everything connected with the dining hall. Pamfilo's servant Sirisco shall be our treasurer and buyer, and carry out Parmeno's instructions. Tindaro shall wait on Filostrato and Dioneo and Pamfilo in their rooms, when the other two servants are occupied with their new duties. Filomena's servant Licisca and my own servant Misia shall remain permanently in the kitchen and carefully prepare the food which Parmeno sends them. Lauretta's Chimera and Fiametta's Stratilia shall take care of the ladies' rooms and see that the whole house is clean. Moreover we will and command

that everyone who values our good grace shall bring back only cheerful news, wherever he may go or return from, and whatever he may hear or see."

Having given these orders, which were approved by everyone, she jumped gaily to her feet and said:

"Here are gardens and lawns and other delicious places, where each of us can wander and enjoy them at will. But let everyone be here at the hour of Tierce<sup>1</sup> so that we can eat together while it is still cool."

The company of gay young men and women, thus given the queen's permission, went off together slowly through the gardens, talking of pleasant matters, weaving garlands of different leaves, and singing love songs. After the time allotted by the queen had elapsed they returned to the house and found that Parmeno had carefully carried out the duties of his office. Entering a ground-floor room decorated everywhere with broom blossoms, they found tables covered with white cloths and set with glasses which shone like silver. They washed their hands and, at the queen's command, all sat down in the places allotted them by Parmeno. Delicately cooked food was brought, exquisite wines were at hand, and the three men-servants waited at table. Everyone was delighted to see things so handsome and well arranged, and they ate merrily with much happy talk.

All the ladies and young men could dance and many of them could play and sing; so, when the tables were cleared, the queen called for musical instruments. At her command Dioneo took a lute and Fiammetta a viol, and began to play a dance tune. The queen sent the servants to their meal, and then with slow steps danced with the two young men and the other ladies. After that, they began to sing gay and charming songs.

In this way they amused themselves until the queen thought it was time for the siesta. So, at the queen's bidding, the three young men went off to their rooms (which were separated from the ladies') and found them filled with flowers as the dining hall had been. And similarly with the women. So they all undressed and went to sleep.

Not long after the hour of Nones<sup>2</sup> the queen arose and made the other women and the young men also get up, saying that it was harmful to sleep too long during the daytime. Then they went out to a lawn of thick green grass entirely shaded from the sun. A soft breeze came to them there. The queen made them sit down in a circle on the grass, and said:

"As you see, the sun is high and the heat great, and nothing can be heard but the cicadas in the olive trees. To walk about at

1. the third canonical hour, 9 A.M.

2. the fifth canonical hour, 3 P.M.

this hour would be foolish. Here it is cool and lovely, and, as you see, there are games of chess and draughts which everyone can amuse himself with, as he chooses. But, if my opinion is followed, we shall not play games, because in games the mind of one of the players must necessarily be distressed without any great pleasure to the other player or the onlookers. Let us rather spend this hot part of the day in telling tales, for thus one person can give pleasure to the whole company. When each of us has told a story, the sun will be going down and the heat less, and we can then go walking anywhere we choose for our amusement. If this pleases you (for here I am ready to follow your pleasure) let us do it. If it does not please you, let everyone do as he likes until evening."

The women and men all favoured the telling of stories.

"Then if it pleases you," said the queen, "on this first day I order that everyone shall tell his tale about any subject he likes."

She then turned to Pamfilo, who was seated on her right, and ordered him to begin with a tale. Hearing this command, Pamfilo at once began as follows, while all listened.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Ninth Tale of the Fifth Day*

Filomena had ceased speaking, and the queen, seeing that nobody was left to speak except Dioneo (who had his privilege) and herself, began cheerfully as follows:

It is now my turn to speak, dearest ladies, and I shall gladly do so with a tale similar in part to the one before, not only that you may know the power of your beauty over the gentle heart, but because you may learn yourselves to be givers of rewards when fitting, without allowing Fortune always to dispense them, since Fortune most often bestows them, not discreetly but lavishly.

You must know then that Coppo di Borghese Domenichi, who was and perhaps still is one of our fellow citizens, a man of great and revered authority in our days both from his manners and his virtues (far more than from nobility of blood), a most excellent person worthy of eternal fame, and in the fullness of his years, delighted often to speak of past matters with his neighbours and other men. And this he could do better and more orderly and with a better memory and more ornate speech than anyone else.

Among other excellent things, he was wont to say that in the past there was in Florence a young man named Federigo, the son of Messer Filippo Alberighi, renowned above all other young gentlemen of Tuscany for his prowess in arms and his courtesy. Now, as most often happens to gentlemen, he fell in love with a lady named Monna

3. This introduction is succeeded by the first of the hundred tales. The remainder of the *Decameron* consists of the tales told by each member of the group on this and nine subsequent days, along with short connecting passages.



Giovanna, in her time held to be one of the gayest and most beautiful women ever known in Florence. To win her love, he went to jousts and tourneys, made and gave feasts, and spent his money without stint. But she, no less chaste than beautiful, cared nothing for the things he did for her nor for him who did them.

Now as Federigo was spending far beyond his means and getting nothing in, as easily happens, his wealth failed, and he remained poor with nothing but a little farm, on whose produce he lived very penuriously, and one falcon which was among the best in the world. More in love than ever, but thinking he would never be able to live in the town any more as he desired, he went to Campi where his farm was. There he spent his time hawking, asked nothing of anybody, and patiently endured his poverty.

Now while Federigo was in this extremity it happened one day that Monna Giovanna's husband fell ill, and seeing death come upon him, made his will. He was a very rich man and left his estate to a son who was already growing up. And then, since he had greatly loved Monna Giovanna, he made her his heir in case his son should die without legitimate children; and so died.

Monna Giovanna was now a widow, and as is customary with our women, she went with her son to spend the year in a country house she had near Federigo's farm. Now the boy happened to strike up a friendship with Federigo, and delighted in dogs and hawks. He often saw Federigo's falcon fly, and took such great delight in it that he very much wanted to have it, but did not dare ask for it, since he saw how much Federigo prized it.

While matters were in this state, the boy fell ill. His mother was very much grieved, as he was her only child and she loved him extremely. She spent the day beside him, trying to help him, and often asked him if there was anything he wanted, begging him to say so, for if it were possible to have it, she would try to get it for him. After she had many times made this offer, the boy said:

"Mother, if you can get me Federigo's falcon, I think I should soon be better."

The lady paused a little at this, and began to think what she should do. She knew that Federigo had loved her for a long time, and yet had never had one glance from her, and she said to herself:

"How can I send or go and ask for this falcon, which is, from what I hear, the best that ever flew, and moreover his support in life? How can I be so thoughtless as to take this away from a gentleman who has no other pleasure left in life?"

Although she knew she was certain to have the bird for the asking, she remained in embarrassed thought, not knowing what to say, and did not answer her son. But at length love for her child got the

upper hand and she determined that to please him in whatever way it might be, she would not send, but go herself for it and bring it back to him. So she replied:

"Be comforted, my child, and try to get better somehow. I promise you that tomorrow morning I will go for it, and bring it to you."

The child was so delighted that he became a little better that same day. And on the morrow the lady took another woman to accompany her, and as if walking for exercise went to Federigo's cottage, and asked for him. Since it was not the weather for it, he had not been hawking for some days, and was in his garden employed in certain work there. When he heard that Monna Giovanna was asking for him at the door, he was greatly astonished, and ran there happily. When she saw him coming, she got up to greet him with womanly charm, and when Federigo had courteously saluted her, she said:

"How do you do, Federigo? I have come here to make amends for the damage you have suffered through me by loving me more than was needed. And in token of this, I intend to dine today familiarly with you and my companion here."

"Madonna,"<sup>4</sup> replied Federigo humbly, "I do not remember ever to have suffered any damage through you, but received so much good that if I was ever worth anything it was owing to your worth and the love I bore it. Your generous visit to me is so precious to me that I could spend again all that I have spent; but you have come to a poor host."

So saying, he modestly took her into his house, and from there to his garden. Since there was nobody else to remain in her company, he said:

"Madonna, since there is nobody else, this good woman, the wife of this workman, will keep you company, while I go to set the table."

Now, although his poverty was extreme, he had never before realized what necessity he had fallen into by his foolish extravagance in spending his wealth. But he repented of it that morning when he could find nothing with which to do honour to the lady, for love of whom he had entertained vast numbers of men in the past. In his anguish he cursed himself and his fortune and ran up and down like a man out of his senses, unable to find money or anything to pawn. The hour was late and his desire to honour the lady extreme, yet he would not apply to anyone else, even to his own workman; when suddenly his eye fell upon his falcon, perched on a bar in the sitting room. Having no one to whom he could appeal, he took the bird, and finding it plump, decided it would be food worthy such a lady. So, without further thought, he wrung its neck, made his little maidservant quickly pluck and prepare it, and put

it on a spit to roast. He spread the table with the whitest napery, of which he had some left, and returned to the lady in the garden with a cheerful face, saying that the meal he had been able to prepare for her was ready.

The lady and her companion arose and went to the table, and there together with Federigo, who served it with the greatest devotion, they ate the good falcon, not knowing what it was. They left the table and spent some time in cheerful conversation, and the lady, thinking the time had now come to say what she had come for, spoke fairly to Federigo as follows:

"Federigo, when you remember your former life and my chastity, which no doubt you considered harshness and cruelty, I have no doubt that you will be surprised at my presumption when you hear what I have come here for chiefly. But if you had children, through whom you could know the power of parental love, I am certain that you would to some extent excuse me.

"But, though you have no child, I have one, and I cannot escape the common laws of mothers. Compelled by their power, I have come to ask you—against my will, and against all good manners and duty—for a gift, which I know is something especially dear to you, and reasonably so, because I know your straitened fortune has left you no other pleasure, no other recreation, no other consolation. This gift is your falcon, which **has** so fascinated my child that if I do not take it to him, I am afraid his present illness will grow so much worse that I may lose him. Therefore I beg you, not by the love you bear me (which holds you to nothing), but by your own nobleness, which has shown **itself** so much greater in all courteous usage than is wont in other men, that you will be pleased to give it to me, so that through this gift I may be able to say that I have saved my child's life, and thus be ever under an obligation to you."

When Federigo heard the lady's request and knew that he could not serve her, because he had given her the bird to eat, he began to weep in her presence, for he could not speak a word. The lady at first thought that his grief came from having to part with his good falcon, rather than from anything else, and she was almost on the point of retraction. But she remained firm and waited for Federigo's reply after his lamentation. And he said:

"Madonna, ever since it has pleased God that I should set my love upon you, I have felt that Fortune has been contrary to me in many things, and have grieved for it. But they are all light in comparison with what she has done to me now, and I shall never be at peace with her again when I reflect that you came to my poor house, which you never deigned to visit when it was rich, and asked

me for a little gift, and Fortune has so acted that I cannot give it to you. Why this cannot be, I will briefly tell you.

"When I heard that you in your graciousness desired to dine with me and I thought of your excellence and your worthiness, I thought it right and fitting to honour you with the best food I could obtain; so, remembering the falcon you ask me for and its value, I thought it a meal worthy of you, and today you had it roasted on the dish and set forth as best I could. But now I see that you wanted the bird in another form, it is such a grief to me that I cannot serve you that I think I shall never be at peace again."

And after saying this, he showed her the feathers and the feet and the beak of the bird in proof. When the lady heard and saw all this, she first blamed him for having killed such a falcon to make a meal for a woman; and then she inwardly commended his greatness of soul which no poverty could or would be able to abate. But, having lost all hope of obtaining the falcon, and thus perhaps the health of her son, she departed sadly and returned to the child. Now, either from disappointment at not having the falcon or because his sickness must inevitably have led to it, the child died not many days later, to the mother's extreme grief.

Although she spent some time in tears and bitterness, yet, since she had been left very rich and was still very young, her brothers often urged her to marry again. She did not want to do so, but as they kept on pressing her, she remembered the worthiness of Federigo and his last act of generosity, in killing such a falcon to do her honour.

"I will gladly submit to a marriage when you please," she said to her brothers, "but if you want me to take a husband, I will take no man but Federigo degli Alberighi."

At this her brothers laughed at her, saying:

"Why, what are you talking about, you fool? Why do you want a man who hasn't a penny in the world?"

But she replied:

"Brothers, I know it is as you say, but I would rather have a man who needs money than money which needs a man."

Seeing her determination, the brothers, who knew Federigo's good qualities, did as she wanted, and gave her with all her wealth to him, in spite of his poverty. Federigo, finding that he had such a woman, whom he loved so much, with all her wealth to boot, as his wife, was more prudent with his money in the future, and ended his days happily with her.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

(1340?-1400)

## CHAUCER'S ENGLISH

**PRONUNCIATION.** Fourteenth-century spelling differed in some respects from that of Modern English. The following table will make the situation reasonably clear and will serve as a guide to pronunciation. The Arabic numerals accompanying words cited as examples refer to lines in the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*.

Sound	Pronunciation	Spelling	Examples
ā	like <i>a</i> in <i>calm</i>	a, aa	Aprille (1), bathed (3)
ǣ	like the first <i>a</i> in <i>aha!</i>	a	Whan (1), that (1)
ē (close)	like <i>a</i> in <i>late</i>	e, ee	me (39), See (59)
ĕ (open)	like the first <i>e</i> in <i>there</i>	ē, ēē	tȝche (308), brȝeth (5)
ĉ	like <i>e</i> in <i>bet</i>	e	engendred (4)
ə (the neutral vowel)	like <i>a</i> in <i>above</i>	e	sote (1)
ī	like <i>i</i> in <i>machine</i>	i, y	shires (15), melodye (9)
ȝ	like <i>i</i> in <i>his</i>	i, y	his (1), y-falle (25)
ō (close)	like <i>o</i> in <i>vote</i>	o, oo	sote (1), hood (103)
ȝ (open)	like <i>oa</i> in <i>broad</i>	ȝ, ȝȝ	hȝly (17), brȝod (471)
ö	like <i>o</i> in <i>for</i>	o	holt (6), holpen (18)
ū	like <i>oo</i> in <i>food</i>	o, ou, ow	droghte (2), shoures (1), fowles (9)
ũ	like <i>u</i> in <i>pull</i>	u, o	Ful (47), yonge (7)
iū	like <i>u</i> in <i>virtue</i>	u	Pruce (53), vertu (307)
ēi	like <i>ē</i> + <i>ī</i>	ai, ay, ei, ey	maistrye (165), day (19), seint (173), veyne (3)

Sound	Pronunciation	Spelling	Examples
au	like <i>ou</i> in <i>mouse</i>	au, aw	daunce (96), bawdrik (116)
eu	like <i>e</i> + <i>u</i>	ew	knew (240)
ēu	like <i>ē</i> + <i>u</i>	ēw	lēwed (502)
oi	like <i>oy</i> in <i>boy</i>	oi, oy	point (114), coy (119)
ōu	like <i>ō</i> + <i>u</i>	ow	undergrowe (156)
ōu	like <i>ō</i> + <i>u</i>	ow	unknōwe (126)
ou	like <i>o</i> + <i>u</i>	o(u), before <i>gh</i>	foughten (62)

The spelling of Chaucer's time does not distinguish between close *e* and open *ē* or between close *o* and open *ō*, but the sounds were distinguished in speech. In our text these distinctions in sound are indicated by spelling.

The consonants had sounds nearly the same as those of Modern English. Generally, however, they were pronounced whenever they appeared in the spelling; none had become silent, like the *k* in Modern English *knight*; *gh* after *a*, *o*, or *u* had a sound like *ch* in the Scottish pronunciation of *loch*; after *i* (*y*) or *e*, like that of *ch* in the German word *ich*.

GRAMMATICAL FORMS. As in Modern English, the plural of nouns is indicated by the ending *-s* or *-es*; but many words which have only *-s* in Modern English have *-es* in Chaucer's language: *shoures* (1), *strandes* (13); this *-es* was pronounced as a separate syllable. Like Modern English *sheep* and *deer*, a few nouns show no change in the plural: *hors* (74), *yēȝer* (82). A few nouns have a plural in *-en*, like Modern English *oxen*: thus, *eyen* (152), *hōsen* (456). A collective noun may take a verb in the plural: *Than longen folk* (12). Instead of *'s*, the genitive singular regularly ends in *-es*: *shires ende* (15), "shire's end." A few nouns have no genitive ending: *lady grace* (88), "lady's grace"; *fader soule* (781), "father's soul"; *Epicurus owne sone* (336), "Epicurus' own son." The genitive plural is written without the apostrophe: *Christes lore, and his apostles twelve* (527), "Christ's teaching, and his twelve apostles'."

Among the pronouns and pronominal adjectives, the word for Modern English *them* is *hem*; the word for *their* and *of them* is *hir(e)*: thus, *So priketh hem nature in hir corages* (11), "So nature incites them in their hearts." *Hir(e)* is also the form corresponding to Modern English *her*. *Him* and *hir(e)* are sometimes used as reflexives, without *-self*: thus, *And peyned hir* (139), "And (she) exerted herself."

Verb forms generally resemble those of Modern English. The *-(e)th* ending of the third person singular is familiar from its appearance in the King James Bible; thus in Chaucer appear forms

like *hath perced* (2), *priketh* (11). In the General Prologue, the second person singular does not occur, and the first only occasionally. However, it may be convenient to have a table of the forms (of a strong verb) usual in Chaucer's language. The endings, which form separate syllables, are here set off by hyphens.

	Present Indicative	Past Indicative	Present Subjunctive	Past Subjunctive
Singular				
1.	rīd-e	rōȝd	rīd-e	rīd-e
2.	rīd-est	rīd-e	rīd-e	rīd-e
3.	rīd-eth	rōȝd	rīd-e	rīd-e
Plural	rīd-e(n)	rīd-e(n)	rīd-e(n)	rīd-e(n)
Present Infinitive: (to) rīde(n)				
Present Participle: rīding(e)				
Past Participle: rīde(n) or y-rīde(n)				

Besides the Modern English adverbial ending in *-ly*, Chaucer's language also has an ending in *-e*: thus, *Sō hōte he lovede* (97), "So hotly he loved"; *sore weep she* (148), "she wept sorely (or bitterly)."

## THE CANTERBURY TALES\*

### General Prologue

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote  
 The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,  
 And bathed every veyne in swich licour,  
 Of which vertu engendred is the flour;  
 When Zephirus eek with his swete brēȝth 5  
 Inspired hath in every holt and hēȝth  
 The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne  
 Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,  
 And smale fowles maken melodye,  
 That slepen al the night with open yē, 20  
 So priketh hem nature in hir corages;  
 Than longen folk to ȝoon on pilgrimages  
 And palmers for to seken straunge strandes

\* Chiefly the work of Chaucer's last years. The text of the General Prologue is based primarily upon that found in *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, edited by Walter W. Skeat, Oxford University Press.

1. *shoures*: showers. *sote*: sweet.  
 2. *droghte*: drought.  
 3. *licour*: moisture.  
 4. *vertu*: power. *flour*: blossom.  
 5. *Zephirus*: the west wind. *eek*: also.  
 6. *holt*: wood. *hēȝth*: field.

7. *croppes*: sprouts.  
 8. *Ram*: a sign of the Zodiac (Aries); the sun is in the Ram from March 12 to April 11. *halfe cours y-ronne*: The sun is now in the next sign (Taurus).  
 9. *fowles*: birds.  
 11. *priketh*: incites. *corages*: hearts.  
 13. *palmers*: pilgrims, who, originally, brought back palm leaves from the Holy Land. *straunge strandes*: foreign coasts.

To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry landes;  
 And specially, from every shires ende 15  
 Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,  
 The hōly blisful martir for to seke,  
 That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,  
 In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay 20  
 Rcdy to wenden on my pilgrimage  
 To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,  
 At night was come into that hostelrye  
 Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,  
 Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle 25  
 In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,  
 That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;  
 The chambres and the stables weren wyde,  
 And wel we weren esed atte beste.  
 And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste, 30  
 So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,  
 That I was of hir felawshipe anon,  
 And made forward erly for to ryse,  
 To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.

But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space, 35  
 Er that I ferther in this tale pace,  
 Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,  
 To telle yow al the condicioun  
 Of ech of hem, so as it semed to me,  
 And whiche they weren, and of what degre; 40  
 And eek in what array that they were inne:  
 And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

A knight ther was, and that a worthy man,  
 That from the tyme that he first bigan  
 To ryden out, he loved chivalrye, 45  
 Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.

14. *ferne halwes*: distant shrines.  
*couthe*: known.

17. *blisful*: blessed. *martir*: St. Thomas à Becket, slain in Canterbury cathedral in 1170. *seke*: seek.

18. *holpen*: helped. *seke*: sick.

19. *Bifel*: it happened.

20. *Tabard*: an inn in Southwark, across the river Thames from London. *lay*: was staying.

22. *corage*: heart.

23. *hostelrye*: inn.

25. *by aventure y-falle*: fallen by accident or chance.

27. *wolden*: past tense of *wol*, "will," "wish" (the Modern English *would*).

28. *chambres*: rooms.

29. *esed atte beste*: taken care of in the best way.

30. *to reste*: at rest, i.e., down.

31. *everichon*: everyone.

33. *forward*: (an) agreement.

34. *ther as I yow devyse*: there where (to the place where) I tell you.

35. *natheles*: not the less.

37. *Me thinketh*: it seems to me (impersonal construction). *acordaunt to*: in accordance with.

40. *degre*: rank or status.

43. *worthy*: excellent.

45. *ryden out*: go on military expeditions. *chivalrye*: the whole code of knightly conduct.

46. *fredom*: generosity.



Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,  
 And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)  
 As wel in Cristendom as heþenesse,  
 And ever honoured for his worthinesse. 50  
 At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;  
 Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne  
 Aboven alle naciouns in Puce.  
 In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,  
 No Cristen man so ofte of his degree. 55  
 In Gernade at the sege çek hadde he be  
 Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.  
 At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,  
 Whan they were wonne; and in the Gręte See  
 At many a noble armee hadde he be. 60  
 At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,  
 And foughten for our feith at Tramissene  
 In listes thryes, and ay slayn his fę.  
 This ilke worthy knight had been also  
 Somtyme with the lord of Palatye, 65  
 Agcyn another heþen in Turkye:  
 And evermore he hadde a sovercyn prys.  
 And though that he were worthy, he was wys,  
 And of his port as meke as is a mayde.  
 He never yet no vileinye ne sayde, 70  
 In al his lyf, un-to no manner wight.  
 He was a verray, parfit, gentil knight.  
 But for to tellen yow of his array,  
 His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.  
 Of fustian he wered a gipoun 75  
 Al bismotered with his habergeoun;  
 For he was late y-come from his viage,  
 And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

47. *werre*: war.  
 48. *therto*: besides. *ferre*: farther.  
 49. *heþenesse*: heathen countries.  
 51. *Alisaundre*: Alexandria, in Egypt, captured in 1365 by King Peter of Cyprus.  
 52. *the bord bigonne*: begun the board, i.e., sat at the head of the table.  
 53. *Puce*: (East) Prussia.  
 54. *Lettow*: Lithuania. *reysed*: campaigned. *Ruce*: Russia.  
 56. *Gernade*: Granada.  
 57. *Algezir*: Algeciras, captured in 1344. *Belmarye*: Benmarin, in Morocco.  
 58. *Lyeys*: Lyas, in Armenia.  
*Satalye*: Adalia, in Asia Minor.  
 59. *Gręte See*: Mediterranean.  
 60. *armee*: armed expedition.  
 62. *Tramissene*: Tiemcen, in Algeria.

63. *listes*: the situation and circumstances of a tournament; formal combat.  
 65. *Palatye*: perhaps Balat, in Turkey.  
 67. *sovereyn prys*: excellent reputation.  
 69. *port*: bearing.  
 70. *vileinye*: abuse.  
 71. *maner wight*: kind of person.  
 72. *verray*: genuine. *parfit*: complete. *gentil*: noble.  
 74. *hors*: horses; see Chaucer's English, p. 709. *gay*: that is, in dress.  
 75. *justian*: a thick cotton cloth.  
*wered*: wore. *gipoun*: underjacket.  
 76. *bismotered*: spotted from rubbing against his coat of mail.  
 77. *viage*: journey.

With him ther was his sone, a yong Squyer,  
 A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler, 80  
 With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.  
 Of twenty yeeȝr of age he was, I gesse.  
 Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,  
 And wonderly deliver, and grette of strengthe.  
 And he had been somtyme in chivachye, 85  
 In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,  
 And born him wel, as of so litel space,  
 In hope to standen in his lady grace.  
 Embrouded was he, as it were a meȝe  
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reȝe. 90  
 Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day;  
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.  
 Short was his goune, with sleeves longe and wyde.  
 Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.  
 He coude songes make and wel endyte, 95  
 Juste and cek daunce, and wel purtreie and wryte.  
 So hote he lovede, that by nightertale  
 He sleep namore than doth a nightingale.  
 Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,  
 And carf biforn his fader at the table. 100  
 A Yeman hadde he, and servaunts namo  
 At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;  
 And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;  
 A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene  
 Under his belt he bar ful thriftily; 105  
 (Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:  
 He arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),  
 And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.

79. *Squyer*: squire.  
 80. *bacheler*: young gentleman.  
 81. *crulle*: curly. *as they were*: as if they had been. *presse*: curling iron.  
 82. *yeeȝr*: years.  
 83. *evene*: average.  
 84. *wonderly*: wonderfully. *deliver*: agile.  
 85. *chivachye*: military expedition.  
 86. *Flaundres*: Flanders. *Artoys*: Artois.  
 87. *as . . . space*: within so short a time.  
 88. *lady*: lady's; see the note on Chaucer's English, p. 709.  
 89. *Embrouded*: embroidered (refers to his clothes). *meȝe*: meadow.  
 90. *floures*: flowers.  
 91. *floytinge*: playing the flute or whistling.  
 94. *jaire*: well.  
 95. *He . . . endyte*: he could compose the music and write the words.

96. *purtreie*: draw.  
 97. *hote*: hotly; see the note on Chaucer's English, p. 709. *nightertale*: nighttime.  
 98. *sleep*: slept.  
 99. *lowly*: modest. *servisable*: ready to help.  
 100. *And carf . . . table*: He carved (the food) for his father and himself, as they sat opposite each other at table.  
 101. *Yeman*: yeoman, an upper servant of the Knight.  
 102. *him liste*: it pleased him (impersonal construction); the person referred to here is the Knight, but the *he* of l. 103 is of course the yeoman.  
 105. *bar*: bore, i.e., carried. *thriftily*: efficiently.  
 106. *Wel . . . yemanly*: He knew well how to handle his equipment like a (good) yeoman.  
 107. *drouped*: drooped. *nocht*: not.

A not-*heȝd* hadde he, with a broun visage.  
 Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage. 110  
 Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,  
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,  
 And on that other syde a gay daggere,  
 Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere;  
 A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene. 115  
 An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;  
 A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.  
 Ther was also a Nonne, a Prioressse,  
 That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy;  
 Hir grētteste ȝoth was but by Seinte Loy; 120  
 And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.  
 Ful wel she song the service divyne,  
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely;  
 And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,  
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe, 125  
 For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.  
 At mēte wel y-taught was she with-allc;  
 She leet nō morsel from hir lippes falle,  
 Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce *depe*.  
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe, 130  
 That nō drope ne fille up-on hir brest.  
 In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.  
 Hir over lippe wyped she sō clene,  
 That in hir coppe was nō ferthing sene  
 Of grēce, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte. 135  
 Ful semely after hir mēte she raughte,  
 And sikerly she was of grēt disport,  
 And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,  
 And peyned hir to countrefete chere  
 Of court, and been estatlich of manere, 140

109. *not-heȝd*: head with hair closely cut.  
 110. *coude*: knew.  
 111. *bracer*: arm guard, worn by archers.  
 112. *bokeler*: shield.  
 114. *Harneised*: mounted.  
 115. *Cristofre*: medal of St. Christopher. *shene*: bright.  
 116. *bawdrik*: belt.  
 117. *forster*: forester, woodsman.  
 118. *soothly*: truly.  
 119. *coy*: modestly subdued.  
 120. *Seinte Loy*: perhaps St. Eligius, apparently a popular saint at this time.  
 121. *cleped*: called, named.  
 123. *Entuned . . . nose*: intoned nasally (a normal practice).  
 124. *faire*: well. *fetisly*: gracefully.

125. *Stratford atte Bowe*: Stratford-Bow, in Middlesex, near London, where there was a nunnery.  
 127. *At mēte*: at the table.  
 129. *depe*: deeply.  
 130. *kepe*: keep,—i.e., see to it.  
 132. *curteisye*: here, "good manners"; the whole sentence means "She was much concerned with good manners."  
 133. *over*: upper.  
 134. *ferthing*: particle. *sene*: visible.  
 136. *semely*: in a decent and correct manner. *raughte*: reached.  
 137. *disport*: attractiveness of manner.  
 139. *peyned hir*: exerted herself. *countrefete*: imitate (not in a disparaging sense). *chere*: behavior.  
 140. *estatlich*: suitably dignified.

And to ben holden digne of reverence.  
 But, for to speken of hir conscience,  
 She was so charitable and so pitous,  
 She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous  
 Caught in a trappe, if it were deȝd or bledde. 145  
 Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde  
 With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.  
 But soȝre weep she if ȝoon of hem were deȝd,  
 Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte:  
 And al was conscience and tendre herte. 150  
 Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was;  
 Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas;  
 Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reȝed;  
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheȝd;  
 It was almost a spanne broȝd, I trowe; 155  
 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.  
 Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.  
 Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar  
 A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;  
 And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene, 160  
 On which ther was first write a crowned A,  
 And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

Another Nonne with hir hadde she,  
 That was hir chapeleyne, and Preestes Threc.

A Monk ther was, a fair for the maistrye, 165  
 An out-rydere, that lovede venerye;  
 A manly man, to been an abbott able.  
 Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable:  
 And, whan he roȝd, men mighte his brydel here  
 Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere, 170

141. *holden*: held. *digne*: worthy.  
*reverence*: respect.

142. *conscience*: sensitivity.

143. *pitous*: inclined to pity.

146. *houndes*: dogs.

147. *wastel-breed*: bread made from fine white wheat.

149. *men*: anyone. *yerde*: stick.  
*smerte*: smartly, sharply.

150. *And . . . herte*: She was all sensitivity and tenderheartedness.

151. *wimpel*: a headdress covering neck and chin. *pinched*: pleated.

152. *tretys*: graceful in shape. *eyen*: eyes; see the note on Chaucer's English, p. 709. *greye as glas*: gray-blue.

153. *ther-to*: also.

155. *spanne*: originally, the length of a hand.

156. *hardily*: indeed.

157. *fetis*: graceful. *war*: aware.

158-159. *Of smal . . . grene*: She wore a set of small coral beads (a

rosary), decorated with green, around her arm.

160. *heng*: hung. *shene*: bright.

161. *write*: inscribed (past participle; see the note on Chaucer's English, p. 709. *a crowned A*: the capital letter encircled by a crown.

162. *Amor vincit omnia*: "Love conquers all"—a motto both religious and secular.

164. *chapeleyne*: secretary and official companion.

165. *a fair . . . maistrye*: a surpassing specimen.

166. *An out-rydere*: a monk authorized to "ride out," i.e., away from the monastery on business for the house. *venerye*: hunting.

168. *deyntee*: fine.

169. *men mighte*: one could.

170. *clere*: this word, like *loude* in l. 171, is probably an adverb.

And ȝek as loude as doth the chapel-belle  
 Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.  
 The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,  
 By-cause that it was old and som-dēl streit  
 This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace, 175  
 And held after the newe world the space.  
 He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,  
 That seith, that hunters been nat hōly men;  
 Ne that a monk, when he is cloisterleȝs,  
 Is lykned til a fish that is waterleȝs; 180  
 This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.  
 But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;  
 And I seyde, his opinioun was good.  
 What sholde he studie, and make himselven wood,  
 Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure, 185  
 Or swinken with his handes, and laboure,  
 As Austin bit? How shal the world be served?  
 Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.  
 Therfore he was a pricasour aright;  
 Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight; 190  
 Of priking and of hunting for the hare  
 Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.  
 I seigh his sleeves purfild at the hand  
 With grys, and that the fyneste of a land;  
 And, for to festne his hood under his chin, 195  
 He hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pin:  
 A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.  
 His hēd was balled, that shōpn as any glas,  
 And ȝek his face, as he had been anoint.  
 He was a lord ful fat and, in good point; 200  
 His eyen stēpe, and rollinge in his hēd,

172. *Ther as*: there where. *keper of the celle*: head of the monastic house.

173. *seint Maure* . . . *Beneit*: St. Maurus and St. Benedict (sixth century A.D.), authors of monastic regulations.

174. *som-dēl*: somewhat. *streit*: strict.

175. *ilke*: same.

176. *held after*: followed. *world*: fashion. *the space*: for the time being.

177. *yaf nat*: literally, "gave not," i.e., cared not. *pulled*: plucked.

180. *lykned*: likened.

182. *thilke*: the same (contracted from "the ilke").

183-188. *And I seyde* . . . *reserved*: These lines are ironical.

184. *What*: to what purpose, why. *wood*: insane.

185. *to poure*: poring.

186. *swinken*: toil.

187. *Austin*: St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.). *bit*: bids (contracted from "biddeth"). *served*: managed, taken care of.

188. *swink*: toil (noun).

189. *pricasour*: tracker (in hunting).

190. *fowel*: bird.

191. *priking*: following the hare's footprints, or pricks.

192. *lust*: pleasure.

193. *seigh*: saw. *purfild*: trimmed.

194. *grys*: a fur of good quality.

196. *curious*: elaborate.

197. *love-knotte*: love knot, an inter-twined pattern. *gretter*: larger.

198. *balled*: bald.

199. *anoint*: anointed, i.e., rubbed with ointment.

200. *in good point*: in a well-nourished state.

201. *stēpe*: protruding.

That stemed as a forneys of a leed;  
 His botes souple, his hors in greȝt estat.  
 Now certainly he was a fair prelat;  
 He was nat pale as a forpynd goost. 205  
 A fat swan loved he best of any roost.  
 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A Frere ther was, a wantown and a merye,  
 A limitour, a ful solempne man.  
 In alle the ordres foure is noon that can  
 So muche of daliaunce and fair langage. 210  
 He hadde maad ful many a mariage  
 Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.  
 Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.  
 Ful wel biloved and famulier was he 215  
 With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,  
 And eek with worthy wommen of the toun:  
 For he had power of confessioun,  
 As seyde him-self, more than a curat,  
 For of his ordre he was licentiat. 220  
 Ful swetely herde he confessioun,  
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun;  
 He was an esy man to yeve penaunce  
 Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;  
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive 225  
 Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.  
 For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,  
 He wiste that a man was repentaunt.  
 For many a man so hard is of his herte,  
 He may nat wepe althogh him sore smerte. 230  
 Therefore, in stede of weping and preyeres,

202. *stemed*: gleamed. *forneys of a leed*: furnace under a caldron.

203. *souple*: supple, not stiff. *estat*: condition.

204. *fair*: fine.

205. *forpynd*: pined-away, wasted-away.

208. *Frere*: friar. *wantown*: gay.

209. *limitour*: a friar licensed to beg within certain geographical limits. *solempne*: of fine appearance.

210. *ordres four*: the four orders of friars—Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, and Augustinians. *can*: knows.

212–213. *He hadde . . . cost*: That is, he had provided dowries for girls who "had" to get married.

214. *Un-to . . . post*: This is like our expression, "pillar of the church."

216. *frankeleyns*: landowners; Chaucer describes one later in the Prologue

(ll. 331 ff.) *over-al*: everywhere. *contree*: region.

218. *power of confessioun*: authority to hear confession.

219. *more*: more extensive.

220. *licentiat*: a person licensed to hear confessions.

223. *to yeve penaunce*: in assigning penance.

224. *Ther . . . pitaunce*: Where he knew that he would have a good pittance (offering, present).

226. *y-shrive*: shrived, confessed.

227. The first *he* refers to the penitent; the second, to the Friar. *dorste*: dared. *avaunt*: confident assertion.

228. *wiste*: knew.

230. *may*: can. *althogh . . . smerte*: although it may pain him bitterly.

Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres.  
 His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves  
 And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.  
 And certainly he hadde a mery note; 235  
 Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.  
 Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.  
 His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;  
 Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.  
 He knew the tavernes wel in every toun, 240  
 And everich hostiler and tappestere  
 Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;  
 For un-to swich a worthy man as he  
 Acorded nat, as by his facultee,  
 To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce.  
 It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce  
 For to deȝen with nȝ swich poraille,  
 But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.  
 And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,  
 Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse. 250  
 Ther nas nȝ man nȝ-wher sȝ vertuuous.  
 He was the beste beggere in his hous;  
 And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt;  
 Nȝon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt; 252a  
 For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho, 252b  
 Sȝ plesaunt was his '*In principio*,'  
 Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente. 255  
 His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.  
 And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe.  
 In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe.

232. *moot*: might well be permitted.  
*povre*: poor.

233. *tipet*: the edge of his cape.  
*farsed*: stuffed.

235. *note*: voice.

236. *rote*: a stringed instrument.

237. *Of yeddinges . . . prys*: He had the reputation of knowing the best ballads.

238. *flour-de-lys*: fleur-de-lis.

241. *hostiler*: innkeeper. *tappestere*: barmaid.

242. *Bet*: better. *lazar*: leper; the term was applied to people with a variety of skin diseases. *beggestere*: beggar woman.

244. *as by his facultee*: in view of his quality and status; the passage is ironical.

245. *seke*: sick.

246. *honest*: suitable to his honor. *may*: can. *avaunce*: advance him (i.e., the Friar).

247. *poraille*: riffraff, trash.

248. *al*: altogether. *vitaille*: foods.

249. *sholde*: could be expected to.

252a-252b. *And yaf . . . his haunt*: These lines, which appear in only a few of the manuscript copies of the Prologue may have been intentionally canceled.

252a *ferme*: fee.

252b. *haunt*: territory.

253. *sho*: shoe.

254. '*In principio*': "In the beginning" (Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1), used as a greeting.

255. *ferthing*: farthing. *er*: ere, before.

256. *purchas*: what he succeeded in acquiring. *rente*: his proper income.

257. *as it were right*: as if he were quite like.

258. *love-dayes*: days appointed for the adjustment of disputes.

For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,  
With a thredbar coge, as is a povre scoler, 260  
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.

Of double worsted was his semi-coge,  
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.  
Somwhat he lipped, for his wantownesse  
To make his English swete up-on his tonge; 265

And in his harping, whan that he had songe,  
His eyen twinkled in his hēȝd aright  
As doon the sterres in the frosty night.

This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A Marchant was ther with a forked berd, 270  
In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,  
Up-on his hēȝd a Flaundrish bever hat;  
His botes clasped faire and fetisly.

His resons he spak ful solempnely,  
Souninge alway th'encrees of his winning. 275  
He wolde the see were kept for any thing  
Bitwixe Middleburgh and Orewelle.

Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.  
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;  
Ther wiste nō wight that he was in dette, 280

So estatly was he of his governaunce,  
With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.

For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,  
But sooth to seyn, I nōȝt how men him calle.

A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also, 285  
That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.

259. *cloisterer*: monk in a cloister.

260. *coge*: cape.

262. *semi-coge*: short cape.

263. *That rounded . . . presse*: The cape hung around him like a bell just out of its mold.

264. *lipped*: lisped. *wantownesse*: playfulness.

270. *Marchant*: merchant.

271. *mottelee*: clothing made of motley, a cloth with a figured pattern, often variegated in color.

272. *Flaundrish*: Flemish. *bever*: beaver.

273. *clasped*: fastened.

274. *resons*: views.

275. *Souninge*: making known. *winning*: profit making.

276. *wolde*: wished. *kept*: protected (from pirates). *for any thing*: at any cost.

277. *Middleburgh*: a port on the coast of Holland. *Orewelle*: an English port, near Harwich.

278. *eschaunge*: exchange. *sheeldes*: "shields"; French coins stamped with

the figure of a shield. The Merchant, among other things, dealt in foreign exchange.

279. *wit*: mind, wits. *bisette*: employed, used.

280. *wiste*: knew, could guess. *wight*: person.

281. *estatly*: dignified. *governance*: conduct of affairs.

282. *bargaynes*: deals. *chevisaunce*: effort to make a profit by deals and trades. These words may imply a possibly shady character attaching to some of the Merchant's activities, but Chaucer is not definite.

283. *For sothe*: for truly.

284. *nōȝt*: know not (contracted from "ne woot").

285. *Clerk*: a scholar; at that time usually a cleric also, as here.

286. *un-to logik . . . y-go*: He had gone beyond the more elementary subjects, like grammar and rhetoric, and on to philosophy. *y-go*: gone (past participle).



As lene was his hors as is a rake,  
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;  
 But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.  
 Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;  
 For he had geten him yet nō benefyce,  
 Ne was sō worldly for to have offyce.  
 For him was lever have at his beddes heȝd  
 Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reȝd,  
 Of Aristotle and his philosophye,  
 Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrye.  
 But al be that he was a philosophre,  
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;  
 But al that he mighte of his frendes hente,  
 On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,  
 And bisily gan for the sōules preye  
 Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.  
 Of studie took he mōst cure and mōst hede.  
 Noght ȝ word spak he mōre than was nede,  
 And that was seyð in forme and reverence,  
 And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.  
 Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,  
 And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly tēche.

290

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300

305

A Sergeant of the Lawe, war and wys,  
 That often hadde been at the parvyt,  
 Ther was also, ful riche of excellēce,  
 Discreet was he, and of gret reverence:  
 He semed swich, his wordes weren sō wyse.  
 Justyce he was ful often in assyse,  
 By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;  
 For his science, and for his heigh renoun  
 Of fees and robes hadde he many ȝȝn.

310

315

289. *holwe*: hollow. *soberly*: sober or solemn (probably an adjective).

290. *overest*: outermost. *courtēpy*: a short coat.

291. *benefyce*: ecclesiastical appointment with a fixed income.

292. *for*: as. *offyce*: a secular post or job.

293. *him was lever*: it was dearer to him, i.e., he preferred.

296. *fithele*: fiddle. *sautrye*: psaltery, a musical instrument.

297. *al be that*: although (literally, "though it be that").

298. *Yet . . . cofre*: a quiet joke; alchemists, who tried to convert other metals into gold, were also called philosophers.

299. *mighte*: could. *hente*: get.

301. *gan*: began.

302. *scoleye*: carry on his studies.

303. *cure*: care.

304. *ȝ*: a, one.

305. *in forme and reverence*: in correct form and with respect.

306. *hy sentence*: high meaning.

307. *Souninge in*: tending toward.

309. *Sergeant*: one of a group of perhaps twenty judges in England. *war*: prudent.

310. *parvyt*: probably the area in front of St. Paul's church, where lawyers often met their clients.

312. *of gret reverence*: deserving great respect.

314. *assyse*: sessions of court held periodically throughout the country.

315. *patente*: official letter of appointment from the king. *pleyn commissioun*: authorization to handle all types of cases.

316. *science*: knowledge, learning.

So greȝt a purchasour was no-wher noon.  
 Al was fee simple to him in effect,  
 His purchasing mighte nat been infect. 300  
 No-wher soȝ bisy a man as he ther nas,  
 And yet he semed bisier than he was.  
 In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,  
 That from the tyme of king William were falle.  
 Therto he coude endyte and make a thing, 305  
 Ther coude nȝ wight pinche at his wryting;  
 And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.  
 He roȝd but hȝomly in a medlee cote  
 Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;  
 Of his array telle I nȝ lenger tale. 310

A Frankeleyn was in his companye;  
 Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.  
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.  
 Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.  
 To liven in delyt was ever his wone, 315  
 For he was Epicurus ȝwne sone,  
 That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt  
 Was verrailly felicitee parfyt.  
 An housholdere, and that a greȝt, was he;  
 Seint Julian he was in his contree. 320  
 His brȝed, his ale, was alwey after ȝȝn;  
 A bettre envyned man was nȝ-wher noon.  
 With-oute bake mȝte was never his hous,  
 Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,  
 It snewed in his hous of mȝte and drinke, 325  
 Of alle deynteys that men coude thinke.

318. *purchasour*: of land, primarily.  
 319. *Al . . . effect*: He always got unrestricted possession.

320. *infect*: legally challenged.

323-324. *In termes*: in citable form.  
*caas*: cases. *domes*: decisions. *king William*: William the Conqueror, whose reign began in 1066. *were falle*: had occurred ("falle" is a past participle here).  
 325. *endyte*: write. *make*: construct (a legal document).

326. The words "so that" are to be supplied between l. 325 and l. 326.  
*pinche*: take legal exception to.

327. *pleyn*: in full.

328. *hȝomly*: simply.

329. *Girt*: fastened around. *ceint*: belt. *barres*: stripes.

330. *lenger*: longer.

331. *Frankeleyn*: a landowner or country squire, not belonging to the nobility.

332. *dayesye*: daisy (the English daisy, a small, white flower, not the same as the American).

333. *sangwyn*: ruddy.

334. *by the morwe*: in the morning.  
*sop in wyn*: a bit of bread moistened with wine.

335. *delyt*: delight, pleasure. *wone*: habit.

336-338. *For he . . . parfyt*: This is a somewhat debased form of the philosophy of Epicurus, the Greek sage of the fourth century B.C.

336. *Epicurus*: Epicurus'.

337. *pleyn delyt*: complete enjoyment.

338. *felicitee*: happiness.

339. *householdere*: one who maintained a house.

340. *Seint Julian*: St. Julian was the patron saint of hospitality.

341. *after ȝȝn*: according to the same (high) standard.

342. *envyned*: provided with wines.

343. *bake*: baked (past participle).

344. *plentevous*: plentiful.

345. *snewed*: snowed.

346. *deynteys*: dainties, attractive dishes.

After the sondry sesons of the yȝer,  
 So chaunged he his mēte and his soper.  
 Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewē,  
 And many a brēm and many a luce in stewe. 350  
 Wō was his cook, but-if his sauce were  
 Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.  
 His table dormant in his halle alway  
 Stood redy covered al the longe day.  
 At sessionouns ther was he lord and sire; 355  
 Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.  
 An anlas and a gipser al of silk  
 Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.  
 A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;  
 Was nō-wher such a worthy vavasour. 360  
 An Haberdassher and a Carpenter,  
 A Webbe, a Dyce, and a Tapicer,  
 Were with us eȝk, clōthed in o liveree,  
 Of a solempne and grēt fraternitee.  
 Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked was; 365  
 Hir knyves were y-chaped nought with bras,  
 But al with silver; wrought ful clene and wēȝel  
 Hir girdles and hir pouches every-dēȝel.  
 Wel semed eȝch of hem a fair burgeys  
 To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys. 370  
 Everich, for the wisdom that he can,  
 Was shaply for to been an alderman.  
 For catel hadde they ynogh and rente,  
 And eȝk hir wyves wolde it wel assente;  
 And elles certein were they to blame. 375

349. *mcwe*: coop.  
 350. *brēm*: bream (a fish). *luce*: pike (a fish). *stewe*: pool.

351. *Wō was his cook*: there was trouble for his cook. *but-if*: unless.

352. *Poynaunt*: tasty. *gere*: gear, i.e., equipment.

353. *dormant*: permanent. In many houses, dining tables were set up before meals and removed afterward, but not in the Franklin's!

355. *sessionouns*: sessions of justices of the peace.

356. *Ful ofte . . . shire*: He was often the delegate in Parliament for the shire, or county.

357. *anlas*: a short dagger. *gipser*: bag, purse.

358. *girdel*: belt. *morne*: morning.

359. *shirreve*: sheriff. *countour*: auditor.

360. *vavasour*: here means "land-owner."

361. *Haberdassher*: as now, a seller of hats; but in Chaucer's age he may

have made them as well.

362. *Webbe*: weaver. *Tapicer*: maker of tapestries.

363. *liveree*: costume, livery.

364. *solempne*: splendid. *fraternitee*: brotherhood, or social guild; these five would have belonged to different trade guilds.

365. *Ful fresh . . . was*: They were handsomely outfitted.

366. *y-chaped*: capped.

369–370. *Wel semed . . . deys*: These lines imply the Guildsmen's fitness for municipal offices, such as the one mentioned in l. 372.

369. *fair*: suitable. *burgeys*: citizen.

370. *yeldhalle*: guildhall. *deys*: dais, raised platform.

371. *Everich*: every one. *can*: knows.

372. *shaply*: fit.

373. *catel*: property. *ynogh*: enough. *rente*: income.

374. *assente*: support (their husbands' claim of fitness to be aldermen).

375. *were*: would have been. *to*

It is ful fair to been y-clept '*madame*,'  
 And goon to vigilyës al bifore,  
 And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.

A Cook they hadde with hem for the nōnes,  
 To boille the chiknes with the marybones, 380  
 And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale.  
 Wel coude he knōwe a draughte of London ale.  
 He coude rōste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,  
 Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.  
 But grēt harm was it, as it thoughte me, 385  
 That on his shine a mormal hadde he;  
 For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

A Shipman was ther, woning fer by weste:  
 For aught I wōt, he was of Dertemouthe.  
 He rōd up-on a rouncy, as he couthe, 390  
 In a gowne of falding to the knece.  
 A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he  
 Aboute his necke under his arm adoun.  
 The hōte somer had maad his hewe al broun;  
 And, certainly, he was a good felawe. 395  
 Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe  
 From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep.  
 Of nyce conscience took he nō keep.  
 If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hand,  
 By water he sent him hōm to every land. 400  
 But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,  
 His strēmes and his daungers him bisydes,  
 His herberwe and his mone, his lōdemenage,

*blame*: deserving of blame.

376. *y-clept*: called.

377. *vigilyës*: celebrations held on the day before saints' days, and others.  
*al bifore*: taking precedence over other people.

378. *royalliche y-bore*: carried for one as if one were royalty.

379. *for the nōnes*: for the occasion.

380. *marybones*: marrowbones.

381. *poudre-marchant*: powder merchant, a flavoring powder. *galingale*: a flavor made from sweet cyperus, a plant.

382. *knōwe*: recognize the quality of.

384. *mortreux*: a thick soup or stew.  
*pye*: a meat pie.

385. *it thoughte me*: it seemed to me.

386. *mormal*: ulcerated sore.

387. *blankmanger*: a rather elaborate dish of creamed meats.

388. *woning*: living. *fer*: far. *by weste*: to the west.

389. *wōt*: know.

390. *rouncy*: perhaps a draft horse.  
*couth*: could.

391. *falding*: cloth made of coarse wool.

392. *laas*: leash; the leash, or string, was around his neck; the dagger hung down under his arm.

395. *good felawe*: Irony is probably implied, making the phrase equivalent to "a fine rascal."

396. *a draught*: a drink. *y-drawe*: drawn (out of the cask).

397. *From Burdeux-ward*: on the way from Bordeaux. *chapman*: man in charge of the cargo. *sleep*: slept.

398. *nyce*: discriminating. *keep*: concern.

399. *hyer hand*: higher hand, victory.

400. *By water . . . land*. He drowned them.

402. *strēmes*: currents. *him bisydes*: near him.

403. *herberwe*: harbor. *mone*: moon (which affects the tides). *lōdemenage*: the art of piloting a ship.

Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.  
 Hardy he was, and wys to undertake; 405  
 With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.  
 He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,  
 From Gootlond to the cape of Finistere,  
 And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;  
 His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne. 410  
 With us ther was a Doctour of Phisyk,  
 In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk  
 To speke of phisik and of surgerye;  
 For he was grounded in astronomye.  
 He kepte his pacient a ful gret del 415  
 In houres, by his magik naturel.  
 Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent  
 Of his images for his pacient.  
 He knew the cause of everich maladye,  
 Were it of hoȝt or colȝd, or moiste, or drye, 420  
 And where engendred, and of what humour;  
 He was a verrey, parfit practisour.  
 The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,  
 Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.  
 Ful reȝdy hadde he his apothecaries, 425  
 To sende him drogges and his letuaries,  
 For ech of hem made other for to wanne;  
 Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.  
 Wel knew he th'olde Esculapius,

404. *Hulle*: Hull, in England. *Cartage*: probably Cartagena, a Spanish port.

405. *to undertake*: about what he undertook.

406. *shake*: shaken.

407. *havenes*: harbors.

408. *Gootlond*: either Jutland or Gotland, a Swedish island. *Finistere*: on the Spanish coast.

409. *cryke*: river mouth. *Britayne*: Brittany.

411. *Phisyk*: medicine.

414. *astronomye*: Astronomy included astrology, the study of the influence of the planets and stars on human lives and affairs.

415. *kepte*: took care of—by observing the different hours of the day and taking account of their respective influences.

416. *magik naturel*: natural magic, an approved set of practices, as opposed to black magic, which involved the devil.

417–418. *Wel coude . . . pacient*: He knew when the stars were favorable for making and using the images which he employed (by the methods of magic)

in treatment of his patient.

419. *everich*: every.

420. *hoȝt . . . drye*: The four elementary qualities—hot, cold, moist, and dry—combined variously in the four basic substances—earth, air, fire, and water.

421. *humour*: The four humors, or body fluids—blood, phlegm, yellow bile (choler), and black bile—their proportions varying in different individuals, were supposed to determine human physiology and temperament. Hence the diagnosis and treatment of diseases was related to their supposed origin in the humors.

422. *verrey*: genuine.

423. *The cause y-knowe*: the cause (once) known (an absolute construction).

424. *bote*: remedy.

426. *letuaries*: prescriptions.

428. *Hir frendschipe . . . biginne*: The friendship between doctor and drug-gists had not begun recently.

429–434. *Esculapius . . . Gilbertyn*: This is a list of eminent medical authorities from ancient Greece, ancient and medieval Arabic civilization, and,

And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus, 430  
 Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;  
 Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;  
 Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;  
 Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.  
 Of his diete mesurable was he, 435  
 For it was of no superfluitee,  
 But of greȝet norissing and digestible.  
 His studie was but litel on the bible.  
 In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,  
 Lyned with taffata and with sendal; 440  
 And yet he was but esy of dispence;  
 He kepte that he wan in pestilence.  
 For gold in phisik is a cordial,  
 Therefore he lovede gold in special.

A good Wyf was ther of bisyde Bathe, 445  
 But she was som-dȝel dȝef, and that was scathe.  
 Of clōȝth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,  
 She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.  
 In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon  
 That to th' offering bfore hir sholde goon; 450  
 And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrȝoth was she,  
 That she was out of alle charitee.  
 Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;  
 I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound  
 That on a Sonday were upon hir hȝed. 455  
 Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet rȝed,  
 Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.  
 Bold was hir face, and fair, and rȝed of hewe.  
 She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,  
 Housbondes at chirch-dore she hadde fyve, 460

finally, England in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Bernard Gordon, John of Gaddesden, and Gilbertus Anglicus).

435. *mesurable*: moderate.

439. *sangwin*: red cloth. *pers*: Persian (blue) cloth.

440. *sendal*: a thin silk.

441. *esy of dispence*: moderate in his expenditures.

442. *in pestilence*: in the time of the great epidemics of plague, of which there were several in Europe in the fourteenth century.

443-444. *For . . . special*: a quiet joke; gold was used in a familiar "cordial," or tonic.

445. *Wyf*: wife. The word denotes a woman too old to be called a child or Though often married, this

"Wyf" is at the moment a widow. *Bathe*: Bath, a town in the south of England.

446. *som-dȝel*: somewhat. *dȝef*: deaf. *scathe*: unfortunate.

447. *haunt*: skill.

448. Ypres and Gaunt (Ghent), towns in Flanders, were famous for their cloth.

450. *sholde*: had the right to.

453. *coverchiefs*: head coverings. *ground*: texture.

456. *hosen*: These garments combined the functions of stockings and close-fitting trousers.

457. *streite*: tightly. *y-teyd*: tied. *moiste*: i.e., not dried out or stiff.

460. *at chirch-dore*: Medieval weddings were often performed at the door of the church.

Withouten other companye in youthe;  
 But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.  
 And thryes hadde she been at Jerusalem;  
 She hadde passed many a straunge strēem;  
 At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne, 465  
 In Galice at seint Jame, and at Coloigne.  
 She coude muche of wandring by the weye:  
 Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.  
 Up-on an amblere esily she sat,  
 Y-wimpled wel, and on hir hēd an hat 470  
 As brōd as is a bokeler or a targe;  
 A foot-mantel aboute hir hips large,  
 And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.  
 In felawship wel coude she laughe and carpe.  
 Of remedies of love she knew perchaunce, 475  
 For she coude of that art the olde daunce.  
 A good man was ther of religioun,  
 And was a povre Persoun of a toun;  
 But riche he was of hōly thought and werk.  
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk, 480  
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde prêche;  
 His parissheis devoutly wolde he tēche.  
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,  
 And in adversitee ful pacient;  
 And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes. 485  
 Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,  
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,  
 Un-to his povre parissheis aboute  
 Of his offring, and ēek of his substaunce.

461. *Withouten*: besides.  
 462. *nouthe*: now.  
 464. *straunge*: foreign.  
 465. *Boloigne*: Boulogne, in France, where there was a shrine.

466. *Galice*: Galicia, in Spain; the shrine of St. James was at Compostella, in Galicia. *Coloigne*: Cologne, in Germany, location of the shrine of the Three Kings who came to worship the infant Jesus.

467. *She coude . . . weye*: She knew much about traveling.

468. *Gat-tothed*: having gaps or spaces between her teeth.

469. *amblere*: a horse used to the gait and speed known as the amble, in contrast with the canter, the trot, and so on.

470. *Y-wimpled*: wimpled; covered by a wimple.

471. *bokeler . . . targe*: kinds of shield.

472. *foot-mantel*: either an outer skirt or a saddle blanket.

474. *carpe*: chat.

475. *remedyes*: cures; Chaucer has Ovid's *Love Cures* (*Remedia amoris*) in mind. *perchaunce*: doubtless.

476. *coude*: knew. *the olde daunce*: the whole technique and pattern.

477. *of religioun*: of religious vocation.

478. *povre*: poor (in wealth). *Per-soun*: parson, parish priest.

480. *clerk*: scholar.

482. *parissheis*: parishioners.

483. *wonder*: wonderfully.

485. *y-preved*: proved. *ofte sythes*: many times.

486. *Ful looth were him*: it would have been very hateful to him. *cursen*: excommunicate (the people in his parish). *tythes*: tithes, payments due to the priest.

489. *Of his offring*: out of what he

He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce. 490  
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,  
 But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,  
 In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte  
 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,  
 Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf. 495  
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,  
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;  
 Out of the gospel he thȝ wordes caughte;  
 And this figure he added ȝek ther-to,  
 That if gold ruste, what shal iren do? 500  
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,  
 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;  
 And shame it is, if a preest take keep,  
 A shiten sheperde and a clenȝ sheep.  
 Wel ȝhte a preest ensample for to yive, 505  
 By his clenness, how that his sheep shold live.  
 He sette nat his benefice to hyre,  
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,  
 And ran to London, un-to seynt Ppules,  
 To seken him a chaunterie for spoules, 510  
 Or with a bretherhȝd to been withhȝlde;  
 But dwelte at hȝom, and kepte wel his fȝlde,  
 So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;  
 He was a sheperde and nȝ mercenarie.  
 And though he hȝoly were, and vertuous, 515  
 He was to sinful man nat despitous,  
 Ne of his spȝche daungerous ne digne,  
 But in his tȝching discreet and benigne.  
 To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse  
 By good ensample, this was his bisinesse: 520

received in the offering at church.

490. *litel thing*: a small amount (of material things).

491. *asonder*: apart.

492. *lafte*: neglected.

493. *meschief*: trouble.

494. *ferreste*: farthest, remotest.  
*muche and lyte*: of high and humble station.

495. *Upon his feet*: on foot.

497. *wroghte*: wrought, acted.

498. *thȝ*: these. *caughte*: took.

500. *what shal iren do?*: what may iron be expected to do?

502. *lewed*: unlearned. "It is no wonder if an unlearned man rusts" (the figure is based on the tarnishing of metals).

504. *shiten*: filthy.

507. *hyre*: hire, rent. He did not rent out his benefice (appointment) to a substitute.

508. *leet*: left; since the *nat* of l. 507 is understood, the meaning is, "He did not leave . . ."

509. *ran*: As above, *nat* is understood—he did not run to London. *seynt Ppules*: St. Paul's, the great church where many priests served in one way or another.

510. *chaunterie for spoules*: an assignment to sing masses daily for the repose of particular souls; a stipend accompanied such assignments, of course.

511. *with*: here equivalent to "by."  
*bretherhȝd*: brotherhood; for example, a guild such as the burgesses of l. 361 ff. formed. *withhȝlde*: retained; i.e., as their priest.

516. *despitous*: contemptuous.

517. *daungerous*: haughty, threatening. *digne*: arrogant.

520. *bisinesse*: concern and occupation—the thing he was busy about.



But it were any persone obstinat,  
 What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,  
 Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.  
 A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.  
 He wayted after no pompe and reverence,  
 Ne maked him a spyced conscience,  
 But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,  
 He taughte, and first he folwed it himselve.

525

With him ther was a Plowman, was his brother,  
 That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,  
 A trewe swinker and a good was he,  
 Livinge in pees and parfit charitce.  
 God loved he best with al his hōle herte  
 At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,  
 And thanne his neighebour right as himselve.  
 He wolde thresshe, and therto dyke and delve,  
 I'or Cristes sake, for every povre wight,  
 Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.  
 His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,  
 Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.  
 In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

530

535

540

Ther was also a Reve and a Miller,  
 A Somnour and a Pardoner also,  
 A Maunciple, and my-self; ther were namō.

The Miller was a stout carl, for the nones,  
 Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones;  
 That proved wel, for overal ther he cam,  
 At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.  
 He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,  
 Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,

545

550

521. *But it were*: but if there were.

522. *What-so*: whoever.

523. *snibben*: chide, rebuke. *for the nones*: Here the phrase could be an intensifier, the equivalent of "very," or could denote "for the occasion," "at the time."

525. *wayted after*: looked for, or sought from other people.

526. *spyced*: literally, "spiced"; the meaning is probably "excessively or unrealistically scrupulous." The Parson was not unduly insistent on nonessentials; he was not a religious pedant.

527. *apostles*: apostles'.

530. *y-lad*: carried. *dong*: manure. *fother*: load.

531. *swinker*: worker.

533. *hōle*: whole.

534. *thogh him gamed or smerte*: whether it gave him pleasure or pain.

536. *therto*: 'also. *dyke and delve*: citch and dig.

537. *wight*: person.

538. *hyre*: hire, payment. *might*: power.

539. *faire*: decently.

540. *propre*: own. *catel*: possessions.

541. *tabard*: a loose coat. *merc*: mare.

542. *Reve*: reeve, farm overseer.

543. *Somnour*: summoner, of the ecclesiastical court.

544. *Maunciple*: manciple, steward.

545. *carl*: fellow. *for the nones*: an intensifier; the Miller was a "very" stout fellow.

546. *braun*: brown.

547. *That proved wel*: that was well proved. *overal*: everywhere.

548. *At wrastling . . . ram*: A ram was the usual prize in wrestling.

549. *knarre*: chap.

550. *heve*: heave, lift. *harre*: hinge, fastening.

Or breke it, at a renning, with his heȝed.  
 His berd as any sowe or fox was reȝed,  
 And ther-to broȝd, as though it were a spade.  
 Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade  
 A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres, 555  
 Reȝed as the bristles of a sowes ȝres;  
 His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.  
 A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;  
 His mouth as greȝt was as a greȝt forneys.  
 He was a janglerc and a goliardeys, 560  
 And that was moȝt of sinne and harlotryes.  
 Wel coude he stȝlen corn, and tollen thryes;  
 And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.  
 A whyt cote and a blew hood wȝred he.  
 A baggepype wel coude he blȝwe and sowne, 565  
 And ther-with-al he broȝhte us out of towne.

A gentil Maunciple was ther of a temple,  
 Of which achatours mighte take exemple  
 For to be wyse in bying of vitaille  
 For whether that he payde, or took by taille, 570  
 Algate he wayted sȝ in his achat,  
 That he was ay biforn and in good stat.  
 Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,  
 That swich a lȝwed mannes wit shal pace  
 The wisdom of an heȝep of lerned men? 575  
 Of maistres hadde he mȝ than thryes ten,  
 That were of lawe expert and curious;  
 Of which ther was a doseyn in that hous  
 Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and land  
 Of any lord that is in Engeland, 580  
 To make him live by his propre good,

551. *renning*: running.  
 554. *cop*: tip.  
 555. *werte*: wart.  
 557. *nose-thirles*: nostrils.  
 559. *forneys*: furnace.  
 560. *janglerc*: chatterer. *goliardeys*:  
 buffoon.  
 561. *that*: his talking and jesting.  
*harlotryes*: incidents of low life.  
 562. *tollen*: take toll (for his serv-  
 ices). *thryes*: thrice—instead of once.  
 563. *a thombe of gold*: Honest mill-  
 ers were said to have a thumb of gold;  
 this one had an honest reputation, at  
 least. *pardee*: to be sure.  
 564. *wȝred*: wore.  
 565. *sowne*: sound.  
 566. *he broȝhte . . . towne*: He rode  
 at the head of the company of pilgrims.  
 567. *gentil*: excellent. *Maunciple*:

- steward of a boarding club or similar  
 group. *temple*: here a lawyers' club in  
 London which used buildings formerly  
 belonging to the Knights Templars.  
 568. *achatours*: purchasers.  
 569. *vitaille*: provisions, food.  
 570. *by taille*: on credit.  
 571. *Algate*: always. *wayted*: took  
 care, watched. *achat*: purchasing.  
 572. *ay*: always. *biforn*: ahead. *stat*:  
 shape (financially).  
 574. *pace*: pass, exceed.  
 575. *heȝep*: heap, company.  
 576. *maistres*: masters, employers  
 (in the club). *mȝ*: more.  
 577. *curious*: careful.  
 578. *doseyn*: dozen.  
 579. *rente*: income.  
 581. *To make . . . good*: to enable  
 him to live on his own resources.

In honour detteleȝs, but-if he were wood,  
Or live as scarsly as him list desire;  
And able for to helpen al a shire  
In any cas that mighte falle or happe;  
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe. 585

The Reve was a splendre colerik man,  
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.  
His heȝer was by his ȝres round y-shorn.  
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn. 590  
Ful longe were his legges, and ful ȝene,  
Y-lyk a staf; ther was no calf y-sene.

Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;  
Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.  
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn, 595  
The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.

His lordes sheep, his nȝēt, his dayerye,  
His swyn, his hors, his stōȝr, and his pultyre,  
Was hoȝly in this reve's governing,  
And by his covenaunt yaf the rkening, 600  
Sin that his lord was twenty ȝer of age;

Ther coude no man bringe him in arrearage.  
Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,  
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;  
They were afraid of him as of the deȝth. 605

His woning was ful fair up-on an heȝth,  
With grene treēs shadwed was his place.  
He coude bettre than his lord purchase.  
Ful riche he was astored prively;  
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly, 610

582. *but-if*: unless. *wood*: insane.

583. *scarsly*: economically. *as him list desire*: as it might please him to wish.

584. *al a shire*: all a shire, a whole county.

585. *happe*: happen.

586. *sette hir aller cappe*: set the cap of them all, i.e., got the best of them.

587. *Reve*: manager of a farm or country estate. *splendre*: slender. *col-erik*: choleric, irascible.

588. *shave*: shaved (past participle). *ny*: close.

590. *His top . . . biforn*: The top of his head was either shaved, like a priest's, or naturally bald.

592. *Y-lyk*: like. *y-sene*: visible.

593. *gerner*: granary. *binne*: bin, crib.

594. *Ther . . . winne*: The auditors to whom the Reeve submitted his accounts were never able to find any-

thing wrong with his records.

595. *by the droghte, and by the reyn*: for both dry and wet seasons.

597. *neȝt*: cattle.

598. *hors*: horses. *stōȝr*: stores, stock.

599. *hoȝly*: wholly.

600. *yaf*: i.e., he (the Reeve) gave.

601. *Sin*: since.

602. *bringe him in arrearage*: show him to be in arrears.

603. *baillif*: farm supervisor. *herde*: herdsman. *hyne*: farm servant.

604. *he*: the Reeve. The word *his* refers in both instances to "baillif," "herde," and "hyne." *sleighte*: trickery. *covyne*: deceit.

605. *the deȝth*: Modern English omits "the."

606. *woning*: dwelling.

607. *shadwed*: shaded.

609. *riche*: richly. *astored*: stocked.

610-612. *His lord . . . thank*: The Reeve gave and lent to his lord—out of

To yeve and lene him of his owne good,  
 And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.  
 In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;  
 He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.  
 This reve sat up-on a ful good stot, 615  
 That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.  
 A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,  
 And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.  
 Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,  
 Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle. 620  
 Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,  
 And ever he roþd the hindreste of our route.  
 A Somnour was ther with us in that place,  
 That hadde a fyr-reþd cherubinnes face,  
 For sawcefleþm he was, with eyen narwe. 625  
 As hoþt he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe;  
 With scalled browes blake, and piled berd;  
 Of his visage children were aferd.  
 Ther nas quick-silver, litarge, ne brimstþon,  
 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre nþon, 630  
 Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,  
 That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,  
 Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.  
 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lþkes,  
 And for to drinkeþ strong wyn, reþd as blood. 635  
 Than wolde he spþke, and crye as he were wood.  
 And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,  
 Than wolde he spþke no word but Latyn.  
 A fewe termes hadde he, twþ or three,  
 That he had lerned out of som decree; 640  
 No wonder is, he herde it al the day;

the lord's own property; but the lord never found out, and hence showed gratitude to the Reeve.

612. *a thank*: an expression of gratitude. *yet*: also.

613. *mister*: trade.

614. *wrighte*: skilled workman.

615. *stot*: horse.

616. *þomely*: dappled. *highte*: was named.

617. *surcote*: outer coat. *pers*: Persian (blue) cloth.

619. *Northfolk*: Norfolk, an English county.

620. *clepen*: call.

621. *Tukked*: His coat was fastened around him by a belt.

622. *hindreste*: hindermost, last. *route*: company.

623. *Somnour*: summoner; he sum-

moned people to appear before the church court (presided over by the archdeacon), and in general acted as a kind of deputy sheriff of the court.

624. *cherubinnes*: Cherubs, properly an order of angels, were represented with red faces in medieval art.

625. *sawcefleþm*: pimpled.

627. *scalled*: scabby. *piled*: scanty.

629. *litarge*: litharge, a remedy used in the treatment of skin disease. *brimstþon*: another remedy.

630. *Boras*: borax. *ceruce*: white lead. *oille of tartre*: cream of tartar.

631. *oynement*: ointment.

632. *That . . . whyte*: that could help him get rid of the white blotches.

633. *knobbes*: bumps.

634. *lþkes*: leeks.

636. *wood*: insane.

And ȝek ye knowen wel, how that a jay  
 Can clepen 'Watte,' as well as can the pope.  
 But who-so coude in other thing him grope,  
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye; 645  
 Ay 'Questio quid iuris' wolde he crye.  
 He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;  
 A better felawe sholde men noght finde.  
 He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,  
 A good felawe to have his concubyn 650  
 A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:  
 Ful prively a finch ȝek coude he pulle.  
 And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,  
 He wolde tēchen him to have non awe,  
 In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs, 655  
 But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;  
 For in his purs he sholde y-punished be.  
 'Purs is the erchedeknes,' seyde he.  
 But wel I woot he lyed right in dēde;  
 Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drēde— 660  
 For curs wol slēȝ, right as assoilling saveth—  
 And also war him of a *significavit*.  
 In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse  
 The yonge girles of the diocyse,  
 And knew hir counseil, and was al hir rēȝd. 665  
 A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,  
 As grēȝt as it were for an ale-stake;  
 A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.  
 With him ther rōȝd a gentil Pardoner

642. *jay*: jaybird.  
 643. *clepen*: call.  
 644. *grope*: test, question.  
 645. *he*: the Summoner.  
 646. *Ay*: always. 'Questio quid iuris': "The question is, what (part) of the law (applies)."  
 647. *gentil harlot*: fine scoundrel.  
 648. *sholde . . . finde*: one would not find.  
 649. *suffre*: allow.  
 650. *good felawe*: congenial rascal, "one of the boys."  
 651. *atte fulle*: fully.  
 652. *a finch . . . pulle*: evidently a colloquial phrase of the period; the Summoner was guilty of the same sin (lechery) as the man from whom he took the wine as a bribe.  
 653. *o-wher*: anywhere.  
 655. *erchedeknes curs*: archdeacon's condemnation and excommunication.  
 656. *But-if*: unless.  
 659. *woot*: know. *right in dēde*: in the very act (of saying such a thing).

660. *Of cursing . . . him drēde*: Each guilty man ought to fear condemnation (by the Church). The "him" is superfluous in Modern English.  
 661. *slēȝ*: slay. *assoilling*: absolution.  
 662. *war him*: beware of. *significavit*: a legal writ committing an excommunicated person to prison; the first word of such a document was *significavit*, a Latin verb evidently having four syllables in fourteenth-century pronunciation. Some degree of irony is apparent in Chaucer's remarks here.  
 663. *daunger*: control. *gyse*: way, manner.  
 664. *girles*: included both boys and girls.  
 665. *counseil*: plans, secrets. *rēȝd*: counsel.  
 667. *ale-stake*: bough of a tree used as the sign of an alehouse.  
 669. *Pardoner*: a seller of ecclesiastical indulgences; see the introductory discussion, p. 506.

Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer, 670  
 That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.  
 Ful loude he song, 'Com hider, love, to me.'  
 This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,  
 Was never trompe of half so greȝt a soun.  
 This pardoner hadde heȝr as yelow as wex, 675  
 But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;  
 By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,  
 And ther-with he his shuldres over-spradde;  
 But thinne it lay, by colpons oȝn and oȝn;  
 But hood, for jolitee, ne wercd he noȝn, 680  
 For it was trussed up in his walet.  
 Him thoughte, he roȝd al of the newe jct;  
 Dischevele, save his cappe, he roȝd al bare.  
 Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.  
 A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe. 685  
 His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,  
 Bretful of pardoun come from Rome al hoȝt.  
 A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goȝt.  
 No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,  
 As smothe it was as it were late y-shave; 690  
 I trowe he were a gelding or a marc.  
 But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,  
 Ne was ther swich another pardonȝr.  
 For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beȝr,  
 Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl: 695  
 He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl  
 That seynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente  
 Up-on the see, til Jesu Crist him hente.  
 He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stȝnes,  
 And in a glas he hadde pigges boȝnes. 700  
 But with thise relikes, whan that he fand

670. *Rouncival*: a religious house near Charing Cross (now part of London). *compeer*: companion.

672. '*Com . . . me*': a popular song of the time.

673. *bar . . . burdoun*: accompanied him in a strong bass voice.

674. *trompe*: trumpet.

676. *strike*: bunch.

677. *ounces*: small clusters. *lokkes*: locks (of hair).

679. *colpons*: strips. *oȝn and oȝn*: one after the other.

681. *walet*: wallet, purse.

682. *Him thoughte*: it seemed to him. *jet*: fashion.

683. *Dischevele*: with his hair loose. *bare*: bareheaded.

685. *vernicle*: a reproduction of the handkerchief bearing the miraculous im-

pression of Christ's face.

687. *Bretful*: brimful. *pardoun*: indulgences. *hoȝt*: hot (the figure is drawn from cookery).

688. *goȝt*: goat.

690. *late y-shave*: lately shaved.

692. *Berwik into Ware*: from north (Barwick) to south (Ware).

694. *male*: bag. *pilwe-beȝr*: pillow-case.

695. *our lady veyl*: Our Lady's (St. Mary's) veil.

696-698. *he hadde . . . hente*: The reference is to a sail of the ship used by St. Peter before he became a disciple.

696. *gobet*: piece.

698. *hente*: took.

699. *latoun*: metal alloy.

A povre person dwelling upon land,  
 Up-on a day he gat him more moneye  
 Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.  
 And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes, 705  
 He made the person and the peple his apcs.  
 But trewely to tellen, atte laste,  
 He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.  
 Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storic,  
 But alderbest he song an offertorie; 710  
 For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,  
 He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,  
 To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;  
 Therefore he song the murierly and loude.  
 Now have I told you shortly, in a clause, 715  
 Th'estat, th'array, the nombre, and eek the cause  
 Why that assembled was this companye  
 In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,  
 That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.  
 But now is tyme to yow for to telle 720  
 How that we baren us that ilke night,  
 Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.  
 And after wol I telle of our viage,  
 And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.  
 But first I pray yow, of your curteisye, 725  
 That ye n'arette it nat my vileinye,  
 Thogh that I pleynly speke in this matere,  
 To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;  
 Ne thogh I speke hir words properly.  
 For this ye knowen al-so wel as I, 730  
 Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,  
 He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,  
 Everich a word, if it be in his charge,  
 Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;

702. *person*: parson, such as is described in ll. 477 ff. *upon land*: in a rural area.

704. *tweye*: two.

705. *feyned*: falsely pretended. *japes*: tricks.

706. *He made . . . apes*: he made fools of the parson and the people.

710. *alderbest*: best of all.

711. *wiste*: knew.

712. *affyle*: file, make smooth.

714. *murierly*: more merrily.

715. *in a clause*: equivalent to "in brief compass," "concisely."

716. *estat*: state, condition.

719. *highte*: was named. *the Belle*: apparently another inn at Southwerk.

721. *baren us*: conducted ourselves. *ilke*: same.

722. *alight*: arrived and settled.

723. *viage*: journey.

724. *remenaunt*: rest.

726. *arette*: account (verb). *vileinye*: rudeness or coarseness.

727. *pleynly*: here, "fully"; but one can see how the modern meaning of "plainly" developed.

728. *chere*: manner, deportment.

729. *properly*: literally.

732. *moot*: must. *reherce*: repeat. *ny*: closely.

732-733. In these lines *he* and *his* refer to the writer.

734. *Al speke . . . large*: no matter how crudely and freely he (the person whose tale is repeated by the writer) may speak.

Or elles he moot telle his: tale untrewē,  
 Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.  
 He may nat spare, al-though he were his brother;  
 He moot as wel seye o word as another.  
 Crist spak him-self ful broȝde in holy writ,  
 And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it. 740  
 Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him reȝde,  
 The wordes mote be cosin to the dēde.  
 Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,  
 Al have I nat set folk in hir degrec  
 Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde; 745  
 My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.  
 Greet chere made our host us everichon,  
 And to the soper sette us anon;  
 And served us with vitaille at the beste.  
 Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste. 750  
 A semely man our host was with-alle  
 For to han been a marshal in an halle;  
 A large man he was with eyen stepe,  
 A fairer burgeys in ther noon in Chepe:  
 Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught, 755  
 And of manhooȝ him lakkede right naught.  
 Eek therto he was right a mery man,  
 And after soper pleyen he bigan,  
 And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,  
 Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges; 760  
 And seyde thus: 'Now, lordinges, trewely,  
 Ye been to me right welcome hertely:  
 For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,  
 I ne saugh this yeeȝ so mery a companye  
 At ones in this herberwe as is now. 765

735. *he*: the writer. *untrewē*: not truthfully.

736. *feyne thing*: make up (spurious) material.

737. The first *he* refers to the writer, the second to the original teller of a tale; *his* refers to the writer.

738. *moot*: must. *o*: one.

739. *broȝde*: broadly.

740. *woot*: know.

742. *mote*: must. *cosin*: cousin, i.e., akin, faithful.

743. *foryeve*: forgive.

744. *Al*: though.

745. *that*: superfluous in Modern English.

746. *wit*: intellect.

749. *vitaille*: food, provisions. *at the beste*: according to the best standard.

750. *us leste*: it pleased us.

751. *semely*: suitable.

753. *stepe*: protruding, prominent.

754. *fairer*: finer-looking. *burgeys*: burgess, citizen. *Chepe*: Cheapside, a street in London.

756. *him lakkede*: there was lacking in him. *right naught*: nothing at all.

757. *therto*: besides. *he was . . . man*: he was a right (i.e., very) merry man.

758. *pleyen*: to play, jest.

760. *maad our rekeninges*: arranged our accounts.

761. *lordinges*: equivalent to "ladies and gentlemen."

763. *trouthe*: troth, faith.

764. *saugh*: saw.

765. *herberwe*: lodging.



Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.  
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,  
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.

Ye gōon to Caunterbury; God yow spēde,  
The blisful martir quyte yow your mēde. 770  
And wel I wōot, as ye gōon by the weyc,  
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;  
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is nōon  
To ryde by the weye dōumb as a stōon;  
And therefore wol I maken yow disport, 775  
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.  
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,  
Now for to standen at my jugement,  
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,  
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weyc, 780  
Now, by my fader sōule, that is dēd,  
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn hēd.  
Hold up your hand, withouten mōre speche.'

Our counseil was nat longe for to seche;  
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys, 785  
And graunted him withouten mōre avys,  
And bad him seye his verdict, as him leste.  
'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for the beste;  
But tak it not, I prey yow, in desceyn;  
This is the poynt, to spēken short and pleyn, 790  
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weyc,  
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye, I  
To Caunterbury-ward, I mēne it so,  
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere twō,  
Of aventures that whylom han bifalle. 795  
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,

766. *Fayn*: gladly. *wiste I how*: if I knew how.

767. *mirthe*: means of entertainment.

769. *spēde*: speed (verb).

770. *quyte*: pay (verb). *mēde*: reward.

772. *shapen yow*: plan (verb). *talen*: tell stories.

774. *dōumb*: dumb.

775. *disport*: amusement.

777. *if yow lyketh*: if it pleases you.

778. *at*: according to, by.

779. *werken*: act, proceed.

781. *fader*: father's.

782. *But*: unless.

783. *Hold . . . hand*: i.e., to vote on the proposal.

784. *counseil*: counsel, resolution. *seche*: seek.

785. *Us thoughte . . . wys*: it seemed to us not worth while to treat it solemnly.

786. *graunted*: i.e., we granted it. *avys*: consideration.

787. *bad*: bade. *verdit*: verdict, decision. *as him leste*: as it might please him.

788. *herkneth for the beste*: equivalent to "give me your best attention."

791. *to . . . weyc*: as a means of shortening your journey.

793. *To Caunterbury-ward*: on the way to Canterbury.

794. *hom-ward*: on the way home, the return to Southwark.

795. *aventures*: events, happenings, including "adventures" in the narrower modern sense of the term. *whylo*: in the past. *han bifalle*: have happened.

That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas  
 Tales of best sentence and most solas,  
 Shal have a soper at our aller cost  
 Here in this place, sitting by this post, 800  
 Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.  
 And for to make yow the more murý,  
 I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,  
 Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.  
 And who-so wol my jugement withseye 805  
 Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.  
 And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,  
 Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,  
 And I wol erly shape me therfore.'

This thing was graunted, and our oþres swore 810  
 With ful glad herte, and preyden him also  
 That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,  
 And that he wolde been our governour,  
 And of our tales juge and reportour,  
 And sette a soper at a certeyn prys; 815  
 And we wold reuled been at his devys  
 In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oþn assent,  
 We been acorded to his jugement.  
 And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon;  
 We dronken, and to reste wente echon, 820  
 With-outen any lenger tarynge.

A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,  
 Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,  
 And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,  
 And forth we riden, a litel more than pas, 825  
 Unto the watering of seint Thomas.  
 And there our host bigan his hors areste,  
 And seyde: 'Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste.  
 Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.'

798. *sentence*: substance, meaning.  
 799. *our aller*: of us all.

802. *murý*: merry.

805. *jugement*: rule, decisions. *withseye*: deny, reject.

807. *vouche-sauf*: vouchsafe, grant.

809. *shape me*: prepare myself.

810. *swore*: sworn.

811. *preyden*: (we) prayed.

814. *reportour*: probably means "record-keeper."

816. *wold*: would. *devys*: direction.

817. *heigh and lowe*: high and low, i.e., important and unimportant matters.  
 818. *by oþn assent*: unanimously.

818. *We been acorded*: We are entered into agreement (to follow his direction).

819. *fet*: brought.

820. *dronken*: drank.

822. *A-morwe*: in the morning.

823. *was our aller cok*: was cock of us all; that is, took charge and got the crowd together (a figure drawn from the barnyard).

825. *riden*: rode. *a litel more than pas*: at a speed a little faster than a walk.

826. *Unto . . . Thomas*: to the watering place (for horses) known as St. Thomas.

827. *arest*: to stop.

828. *herkneth, if yow leste*: listen, if you please.

829. *Ye woot . . . recorde*: You know your agreement, and I remind you of it.

If even-song and morwe-song acorde, 830  
 Lat see now who shal telle the firste tale.  
 As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,  
 Who-so be rebel to my judgement  
 Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.  
 Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne; 835  
 He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.  
 Sire knight,' quod he, 'my maister and my lord,  
 Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord.  
 Cometh neȝer,' quod he, 'my lady prioressse;  
 And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse, 840  
 Ne studieth noght; ley hand to, every man.'  
 Anon to drawen every wight bigan,  
 And shortly for to tellen, as it was,  
 Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,  
 The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight, 845  
 Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight;  
 And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,  
 By forward and by composicioun,  
 As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?  
 And whan this gode man saugh it was so, 850  
 As he that wys was and obedient  
 To kepe his forward by his free assent,  
 He seyde: 'Sin I shall biginne the game,  
 What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!  
 Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seyc.' 855  
 And with that word we riden forth our weye;  
 And he bigan with right a mery chere  
 His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

830. *If . . . acorde*: The figure is from the church services, of course; the meaning is, "If you are now in the frame of mind in which you were yesterday evening."

832. *mote*: may.

833. *be*: may be. *rebel to*: rebellious against.

835. *Now . . . twinne*: Now draw lots, before we separate farther.

838. *acord*: decision.

840. *shamfastnesse*: shyness.

841. *Ne studieth noght*: don't hesitate or deliberate. *ley hand to, every man*: equivalent to "come on, everybody!"

844. *Were it . . . cas*: whether it was by accident, destiny, or chance.

845. *sothe*: truth. *cut*: lot.

847. *moste*: must. *resoun*: right.

848. *forward*: agreement. *composicioun*: compact.

853. *Sin*: since.

854. *a*: in.

856. *riden*: rode.

### Prologue to the Pardoner's Tale\*

"In churches," said the Pardoner, "when I preach,  
 I use, milords, a lofty style of speech  
 And ring it out as roundly as a bell,

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dore Morrison. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

Knowing by rote all that I have to tell.

My text is ever the same, and ever was:

*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*

"First I inform them whence I come; that done,

I then display my papal bulls, each one.

I show my license first, my body's warrant,

Sealed by the bishop, for it would be abhorrent

If any man made bold, though priest or clerk,

To interrupt me in Christ's holy work.

And after that I give myself full scope.

Bulls in the name of cardinal and pope,

Of bishops and of patriarchs I show.

I say in Latin some few words or so

To spice my sermon; it flavors my appeal

And stirs my listeners to greater zeal.

Then I display my cases made of glass

Crammed to the top with rags and bones. They pass

For relics with all the people in the place.

I have a shoulder bone in a metal case,

Part of a sheep owned by a holy Jew.

'Good men,' I say, 'heed what I'm telling you:

Just let this bone be dipped in any well

And if cow, calf, or sheep, or ox should swell

From eating a worm, or by a worm be stung,

Take water from this well and wash its tongue

And it is healed at once. And furthermore

Of scab and ulcers and of every sore

Shall every sheep be cured, and that straightway,

That drinks from the same well. Heed what I say:

If the good man who owns the beasts will go,

Fasting, each week, and drink before cockcrow

Out of this well, his cattle shall be brought

To multiply—that holy Jew so taught

Our elders—and his property increase.

"Moreover, sirs, this bone cures jealousies.

Though into a jealous madness a man fell,

Let him cook his soup in water from this well,

He'll never, though for truth he knew her sin,

Suspect his wife again, though she took in

A priest, or even two of them or three.

"Now here's a mitten that you all can see.

Whoever puts his hand in it shall gain,

When he sows his land, increasing crops of grain,

Be it wheat or oats, provided that he bring  
His penny or so to make his offering.

“There is one word of warning I must say,

Good men and women. If any here today

Has done a sin so horrible to name

He daren't be shriven of it for the shame,

Or if any woman, young or old, is here

Who has cuckolded her husband, be it clear

They may not make an offering in that case

To these my relics; they have no power nor grace.

But any who is free of such dire blame,

Let him come up and offer in God's name

And I'll absolve him through the authority

That by the pope's bull has been granted me.’

“By such hornswoggling I've won, year by year,

A hundred marks since being a pardoner.

I stand in my pulpit like a true divine,

And when the people sit I preach my line

To ignorant souls, as you have heard before,

And tell skullduggeries by the hundred more.

Then I take care to stretch my neck well out

And over the people I nod and peer about

Just like a pigeon perching on a shed.

My hands fly and my tongue wags in my head

So busily that to watch me is a joy.

Avarice is the theme that I employ

In all my sermons, to make the people free

In giving pennies—especially to me!

My mind is fixed on what I stand to win

And not at all upon correcting sin.

I do not care, when they are in the grave,

If souls go berry-picking that I could save.

Truth is that evil purposes determine,

And many a time, the origin of a sermon:

Some to please people and by flattery

To gain advancement through hypocrisy,

Some for vainglory, some again for hate.

For when I daren't fight otherwise, I wait

And give him a tongue-lashing when I preach.

No man escapes or gets beyond the reach

Of my defaming tongue, supposing he

Has done a wrong to my brethren or to me.

62. *A hundred marks*: probably the equivalent of several thousand dollars in modern purchasing power.

For though I do not tell his proper name,  
 People will recognize him all the same. 90  
 By sign and circumstance I let them learn.  
 Thus I serve those who have done us an ill turn.  
 Thus I spit out my venom under hue  
 Of sanctity, and seem devout and true!  
 "But to put my purpose briefly, I confess 95  
 I preach for nothing but for covetousness.  
 That's why my text is still and ever was  
*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*  
 For by this text I can denounce, indeed,  
 The very vice I practice, which is greed. 100  
 But though that sin is lodged in my own heart,  
 I am able to make other people part  
 From avarice, and sorely to repent,  
 Though that is not my principal intent.  
 "Then I bring in examples, many a one, 105  
 And tell them many a tale of days long done.  
 Plain folk love tales that come down from of old.  
 Such things their minds can well report and hold.  
 Do you think that while I have the power to preach  
 And take in silver and gold for what I teach 110  
 I shall ever live in willful poverty?  
 No, no, that never was my thought, certainly.  
 I mean to preach and beg in sundry lands.  
 I won't do any labor with my hands,  
 Nor live by making baskets. I don't intend 115  
 To beg for nothing; that is not my end.  
 I won't ape the apostles; I must eat,  
 I must have money, wool, and cheese, and wheat,  
 Though I took it from the meanest wretch's tillage  
 Or from the poorest widow in a village, 120  
 Yes, though her children starved for want. In fine,  
 I mean to drink the liquor of the vine  
 And have a jolly wench in every town.  
 But, in conclusion, lords, I will get down  
 To business: you would have me tell a tale. 125  
 Now that I've had a drink of corny ale,  
 By God, I hope the thing I'm going to tell  
 Is one that you'll have reason to like well.  
 For though myself a very sinful man,  
 I can tell a moral tale, indeed I can, 130  
 One that I use to bring the profits in  
 While preaching. Now be still, and I'll begin."

The Pardoner's Tale\*

There was a company of young folk living  
 One time in Flanders, who were bent on giving  
 Their lives to follies and extravagances,  
 Brothels and taverns, where they held their dances  
 With lutes, harps, and guitars, diced at all hours, 5  
 And also ate and drank beyond their powers,  
 Through which they paid the devil sacrifice  
 In the devil's temple with their drink and dice,  
 Their abominable excess and dissipation.  
 They swore oaths that were worthy of damnation; 10  
 It was grisly to be listening when they swore.  
 The blessed body of our Lord they tore—  
 The Jews, it seemed to them, had failed to rend  
 His body enough—and each laughed at his friend  
 And fellow in sin. To encourage their pursuits 15  
 Came comely dancing girls, peddlers of fruits,  
 Singers with harps, bawds and confectioners  
 Who are the very devil's officers  
 To kindle and blow the fire of lechery  
 That is the follower of gluttony. 20  
 Witness the Bible, if licentiousness  
 Does not reside in wine and drunkenness!  
 Recall how drunken Lot, unnaturally,  
 With his two daughters lay unwittingly,  
 So drunk he had no notion what he did. 25  
 Herod, the stories tell us, God forbid,  
 When full of liquor at his banquet board  
 Right at his very table gave the word  
 To kill the Baptist, John, though guiltless he.  
 Seneca says a good word, certainly. 30  
 He says there is no difference he can find  
 Between a man who has gone out of his mind  
 And one who carries drinking to excess,  
 Only that madness outlasts drunkenness.  
 O gluttony, first cause of mankind's fall, 35  
 Of our damnation the cursed original  
 Until Christ bought us with his blood again!  
 How dearly paid for by the race of men  
 Was this detestable iniquity!

\* From *The Portable Chaucer* (Viking Press). Copyright 1949 by Theodore Morrison.

23-25. *drunken Lot . . . did*: Genesis 19:33-35.

26-29. *Herod . . . though guiltless*

*he*: Matthew 14:1-11; Mark 6:14-28.

30-34. *Seneca . . . drunkenness*: in his *Epistles*, Epistle lxxxiii.

35. *gluttony . . . fall*: since the Fall was caused by man's eating the forbidden apple.

This whole world was destroyed through gluttony. 40

Adam our father and his wife also  
From paradise to labor and to woe  
Were driven for that selfsame vice, indeed.  
As long as Adam fasted—so I read—  
He was in heaven; but as soon as he 45  
Devoured the fruit of that forbidden tree  
Then he was driven out in sorrow and pain.  
Of gluttony well ought we to complain!  
Could a man know how many maladies  
Follow indulgences and gluttonies. 50  
He would keep his diet under stricter measure  
And sit at table with more temperate pleasure.  
The throat is short and tender is the mouth,  
And hence men toil east, west, and north, and south,  
In earth, and air, and water—alas to think— 55  
Fetching a glutton dainty meat and drink.

This is a theme, O Paul, that you well treat:  
"Meat unto belly, and belly unto meat,  
God shall destroy them both," as Paul has said.  
When a man drinks the white wine and the red— 60  
This is a foul word, by my soul, to say,  
And fouler is the deed in every way—  
He makes his throat his privy through excess.

The Apostle says, weeping for piteousness,  
"There are many of whom I told you—at a loss 65  
I say it, weeping—enemies of Christ's cross,  
Whose belly is their god; their end is death."  
O cursed belly! Sack of stinking breath  
In which corruption lodges, dung abounds!  
At either end of you come forth foul sounds. 70  
Great cost it is to fill you, and great pain!  
These cooks, how they must grind and pound and strain  
And transform substance into accident  
To please your cravings, though exorbitant!  
From the hard bones they knock the marrow out. 75  
They'll find a use for everything, past doubt,  
That down the gullet sweet and soft will glide.  
The spiceries of leaf and root provide  
Sauces that are concocted for delight,  
To give a man a second appetite. 80

57–59. *Paul . . . has said:* I Corinthians 6:13.

64–67. *Apostle . . . death.* Philip-  
pians 3:18–19.

73. *And . . . accident:* A distinction  
was made in philosophy between "sub-  
stance," the real nature of a thing, and  
"accident," its merely sensory qualities,  
such as flavor.



But truly, he whom gluttonies entice  
Is dead, while he continues in that vice.

O drunken man, disfigured is your face,  
Sour is your breath, foul are you to embrace!  
You seem to mutter through your drunken nose 85  
The sound of "Samson, Samson," yet God knows  
That Samson never indulged himself in wine.

Your tongue is lost, you fall like a stuck swine,  
And all the self-respect that you possess  
Is gone, for of man's judgment, drunkenness 90  
Is the very sepulcher and annihilation.

A man whom drink has under domination  
Can never keep a secret in his head.

Now steer away from both the white and red,  
And most of all from that white wine keep wide 95  
That comes from Lepe. They sell it in Cheapside  
And Fish Street. It's a Spanish wine, and sly

To creep in other wines that grow nearby,  
And such a vapor it has that with three drinks  
It takes a man to Spain; although he thinks 100  
He is home in Cheapside, he is far away  
At Lepe. Then "Samson, Samson" will he say!

By God himself, who is omnipotent,  
All the great exploits in the Old Testament  
Were done in abstinence, I say, and prayer. 105  
Look in the Bible, you may learn it there.

Attila, conqueror of many a place,  
Died in his sleep in shame and in disgrace  
Bleeding out of his nose in drunkenness.

A captain ought to live in temperateness! 110  
And more than this, I say, remember well  
The injunction that was laid on Lemuel—  
Not Samuel, but Lemuel, I say!

Read in the Bible; in the plainest way  
Wine is forbidden to judges and to kings. 115  
This will suffice; no more upon these things.

Now that I've shown what gluttony will do,  
Now I will warn you against gambling, too;  
Gambling, the very mother of low scheming,  
Of lying and forswearing and blaspheming 120  
Against Christ's name, of murder and waste as well

87. *Samson* . . . *wine*: Judges 13:4.

96. *Lepe*: a town in Spain noted for strong wines.

96-97. *Cheapside and Fish Street*: in London.

107. *Attila*: leader of the Hun invasion of Europe (fifth century A.D.).

112. *injunction* . . . *Lemuel*: Prov-  
erbs 31:4-7.

Alike of goods and time; and, truth to tell,  
 With honor and renown it cannot suit  
 To be held a common gambler by repute.  
 The higher a gambler stands in power and place, 125  
 The more his name is lowered in disgrace.  
 If a prince gambles, whatever his kingdom be,  
 In his whole government and policy  
 He is, in all the general estimation,  
 Considered so much less in reputation. 130

Stilbon, who was a wise ambassador,  
 From Lacedaemon once to Corinth bore  
 A mission of alliance. When he came  
 It happened that he found there at a game  
 Of hazard all the great ones of the land, 135  
 And so, as quickly as it could be planned,  
 He stole back, saying, "I will not lose my name  
 Nor have my reputation put to shame  
 Allying you with gamblers. You may send  
 Other wise emissaries to gain your end, 140  
 For by my honor, rather than ally  
 My countrymen to gamblers, I will die.  
 For you that are so gloriously renowned  
 Shall never with this gambling race be bound  
 By will of mine or treaty I prepare." 145  
 Thus did this wise philosopher declare.

Remember also how the Parthians' lord  
 Sent King Demetrius, as the books record,  
 A pair of golden dice, by this proclaiming  
 His scorn, because that king was known for gaming, 150  
 And the king of Parthia therefore held his crown  
 Devoid of glory, value, or renown.  
 Lords can discover other means of play  
 More suitable to while the time away.

Now about oaths I'll say a word or two, 155  
 Great oaths and false oaths, as the old books do.  
 Great swearing is a thing abominable,  
 And false oaths yet more reprehensible.  
 Almighty God forbade swearing at all,  
 Matthew be witness; but specially I call 160  
 The holy Jeremiah on this head.  
 "Swear thine oaths truly, do not lie," he said.  
 "Swear under judgment, and in righteousness."  
 But idle swearing is a great wickedness.

Consult and see, and he that understands 165  
 In the first table of the Lord's commands  
 Will find the second of his commandments this:  
 "Take not the Lord's name idly or amiss."  
 If a man's oaths and curses are extreme,  
 Vengeance shall find his house, both roof and beam. 170  
 "By the precious heart of God," and "By his nails"—  
 "My chance is seven, by Christ's blood at Hailes,  
 Yours five and three." "Cheat me, and if you do,  
 By God's arms, with this knife I'll run you through!"—  
 Such fruit comes from the bones, that pair of bitches: 175  
 Oaths broken, treachery, murder. For the riches  
 Of Christ's love, give up curses, without fail,  
 Both great and small!—Now, sirs, I'll tell my tale.  
 These three young roisterers of whom I tell  
 Long before prime had rung from any bell 180  
 Were seated in a tavern at their drinking,  
 And as they sat, they heard a bell go clinking  
 Before a corpse being carried to his grave.  
 One of these roisterers, when he heard it, gave  
 An order to his boy: "Go out and try 185  
 To learn whose corpse is being carried by.  
 Get me his name, and get it right. Take heed."  
 "Sir," said the boy, "there isn't any need.  
 I learned before you came here, by two hours.  
 He was, it happens, an old friend of yours, 190  
 And all at once, there on his bench upright  
 As he was sitting drunk, he was killed last night.  
 A sly thief, Death men call him, who deprives  
 All the people in this country of their lives,  
 Came with his spear and smiting his heart in two 195  
 Went on his business with no more ado.  
 A thousand have been slaughtered by his hand  
 During this plague. And, sir, before you stand  
 Within his presence, it should be necessary,  
 It seems to me, to know your adversary. 200  
 Be evermore prepared to meet this foe.  
 My mother taught me thus; that's all I know."  
 "Now by St. Mary," said the innkeeper,  
 "This child speaks truth. Man, woman, laborer,  
 Servant, and child the thief has slain this year 205  
 In a big village a mile or more from here.  
 I think it is his place of habitation.

172. *My . . . seven*: My lucky number is seven. *Hailes*: an abbey in Gloucestershire, where some of Christ's blood was believed to be preserved.

It would be wise to make some preparation  
Before he brought a man into disgrace."

"God's arms!" this roisterer said. "So that's the case! 210

Is it so dangerous with this thief to meet?

I'll look for him by every path and street,

I vow it, by God's holy bones! Hear me,

Fellows of mine, we are all one, we three.

Let each of us hold up his hand to the other 215

And each of us become his fellow's brother.

We'll slay this Death, who slaughters and betrays.

He shall be slain whose hand so many slays,

By the dignity of God, before tonight!"

The three together set about to plight 220

Their oaths to live and die each for the other

Just as though each had been to each born brother,

And in their drunken frenzy up they get

And toward the village off at once they set

Which the innkeeper had spoken of before, 225

And many were the grisly oaths they swore.

They rent Christ's precious body limb from limb—

Death shall be dead, if they lay hands on him!

When they had hardly gone the first half mile,

Just as they were about to cross a stile, 230

An old man, poor and humble, met them there.

The old man greeted them with a meek air

And said, "God bless you, lords, and be your guide."

"What's this?" the proudest of the three replied.

"Old beggar, I hope you meet with evil grace! 235

Why are you all wrapped up except your face?

What are you doing alive so many a year?"

The old man at these words began to peer

Into this gambler's face. "Because I can,

Though I should walk to India, find no man," 240

He said, "in any village or any town,

Who for my age is willing to lay down

His youth. So I must keep my old age still

For as long a time as it may be God's will.

Nor will Death take my life from me, alas! 245

Thus like a restless prisoner I pass

And on the ground, which is my mother's gate,

I walk and with my staff both early and late

I knock and say, 'Dear mother, let me in!

See how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin! 250

Alas, when shall my bones be laid to rest?

I would exchange with you my clothing chest,

Mother, that in my chamber long has been  
For an old haircloth rag to wrap me in.  
And yet she still refuses me that grace. 255  
All white, therefore, and withered is my face.

"But, sirs, you do yourselves no courtesy  
To speak to an old man so churlishly  
Unless he had wronged you either in word or deed.  
As you yourselves in Holy Writ may read, 260  
'Before an aged man whose head is hoar  
Men ought to rise.' I counsel you, therefore,  
No harm nor wrong here to an old man do,  
No more than you would have men do to you  
In your old age, if you so long abide. 265  
And God be with you, whether you walk or ride!  
I must go yonder where I have to go."

"No, you old beggar, by St. John, not so,"  
Said another of these gamblers. "As for me,  
By God, you won't get off so easily! 270  
You spoke just now of that false traitor, Death,  
Who in this land robs all our friends of breath.  
Tell where he is, since you must be his spy,  
Or you will suffer for it, so say I  
By God and by the holy sacrament. 275  
You are in league with him, false thief, and bent  
On killing us young folk, that's clear to my mind."

"If you are so impatient, sirs, to find  
Death," he replied, "turn up this crooked way,  
For in that grove I left him, truth to say, 280  
Beneath a tree, and there he will abide,  
No boast of yours will make him run and hide.  
Do you see that oak tree? Just there you will find  
This Death, and God, who bought again mankind,  
Save and amend you!" So said this old man; 285  
And promptly each of these three gamblers ran  
Until he reached the tree, and there they found  
Florins of fine gold, minted bright and round,  
Nearly eight bushels of them, as they thought.  
And after Death no longer then they sought. 290  
Each of them was so ravished at the sight,  
So fair the florins glittered and so bright,  
That down they sat beside the precious hoard.  
The worst of them, he uttered the first word.

"Brothers," he told them, "listen to what I say. 295  
My head is sharp, for all I joke and play.

Fortune has given us this pile of treasure  
 To set us up in lives of ease and pleasure.  
 Lightly it comes, lightly we'll make it go.  
 God's precious dignity! Who was to know 300  
 We'd ever tumble on such luck today?

If we could only carry this gold away,  
 Home to my house, or either one of yours—  
 For well you know that all this gold is ours—  
 We'd touch the summit of felicity. 305

But still, by daylight that can hardly be.  
 People would call us thieves, too bold for stealth,  
 And they would have us hanged for our own wealth.  
 It must be done by night, that's our best plan,  
 As prudently and slyly as we can. 310

Hence my proposal is that we should all  
 Draw lots, and let's see where the lot will fall,  
 And the one of us who draws the shortest stick  
 Shall run back to the town, and make it quick,  
 And bring us bread and wine here on the sly, 315  
 And two of us will keep a watchful eye  
 Over this gold; and if he doesn't stay  
 Too long in town, we'll carry this gold away  
 By night, wherever we all agree it's best."

One of them held the cut out in his fist 320  
 And had them draw to see where it would fall,  
 And the cut fell on the youngest of them all.  
 At once he set off on his way to town,  
 And the very moment after he was gone  
 The one who urged this plan said to the other: 325  
 "You know that by sworn oath you are my brother.  
 I'll tell you something you can profit by.  
 Our friend has gone, that's clear to any eye,  
 And here is gold, abundant as can be,  
 That we propose to share alike, we three. 330  
 But if I worked it out, as I could do,  
 So that it could be shared between us two,  
 Wouldn't that be a favor, a friendly one?"

The other answered, "How that can be done,  
 I don't quite see. He knows we have the gold. 335  
 What shall we do, or what shall he be told?"

"Will you keep the secret tucked inside your head?  
 And in a few words," the first scoundrel said,  
 "I'll tell you how to bring this end about."

"Granted," the other told him. "Never doubt, 340  
 I won't betray you, that you can believe."

"Now," said the first, "we are two, as you pereceive,  
 And two of us must have more strength than one.  
 When he sits down, get up as if in fun  
 And wrestle with him. While you play this game 345  
 I'll run him through the ribs. You do the same  
 With your dagger there, and then this gold shall be  
 Divided, dear friend, between you and me.  
 Then all that we desire we can fulfill,  
 And both of us can roll the dice at will." 350  
 Thus in agreement these two scoundrels fell  
 To slay the third, as you have heard me tell.

The youngest, who had started off to town,  
 Within his heart kept rolling up and down  
 The beauty of those florins, new and bright. 355  
 "O Lord," he thought, "were there some way I might  
 Have all this treasure to myself alone,  
 There isn't a man who dwells beneath God's throne  
 Could live a life as merry as mine should be!"  
 And so at last the fiend, our enemy, 360  
 Put in his head that he could gain his ends  
 If he bought poison to kill off his friends.  
 Finding his life in such a sinful state,  
 The devil was allowed to seal his fate.  
 For it was altogether his intent 365  
 To kill his friends, and never to repent.  
 So off he set, no longer would he tarry,  
 Into the town, to an apothecary,  
 And begged for poison; he wanted it because  
 He meant to kill his rats; besides, there was 370  
 A polecat living in his hedge, he said,  
 Who killed his capons; and when he went to bed  
 He wanted to take vengeance, if he might,  
 On vermin that devoured him by night.

The apothecary answered, "You shall have 375  
 A drug that as I hope the Lord will save  
 My soul, no living thing in all creation,  
 Eating or drinking of this preparation  
 A dose no bigger than a grain of wheat,  
 But promptly with his death-stroke he shall meet. 380  
 Die, that he will, and in a briefer while  
 Than you can walk the distance of a mile,  
 This poison is so strong and virulent."

Taking the poison, off the scoundrel went,  
 Holding it in a box, and next he ran 385  
 To the neighboring street, and borrowed from a man

Three generous flagons. He emptied out his drug  
 In two of them, and kept the other jug  
 For his own drink; he let no poison lurk  
 In that! And so all night he meant to work 390  
 Carrying off the gold. Such was his plan,  
 And when he had filled them, this accursed man  
 Retraced his path, still following his design,  
 Back to his friends with his three jugs of wine.

But why dilate upon it any more? 395  
 For just as they had planned his death before,  
 Just so they killed him, and with no delay.  
 When it was finished, one spoke up to say:  
 "Now let's sit down and drink, and we can bury  
 His body later on. First we'll be merry," 400  
 And as he said the words, he took the jug  
 That, as it happened, held the poisonous drug,  
 And drank, and gave his friend a drink as well,  
 And promptly they both died. But truth to tell,  
 In all that Avicenna ever wrote 405  
 He never described in chapter, rule, or note  
 More marvelous signs of poisoning, I suppose,  
 Than appeared in these two wretches at the close.  
 Thus they both perished for their homicide,  
 And thus the traitorous poisoner also died. 410

O sin accursed above all cursedness,  
 O treacherous murder, O foul wickedness,  
 O gambling, lustfulness, and gluttony,  
 Traducer of Christ's name by blasphemy  
 And monstrous oaths, through habit and through pride! 415  
 Alas, mankind! Ah, how may it betide  
 That you to your Creator, he that wrought you  
 And even with his precious heart's blood bought you,  
 So falsely and ungratefully can live?

And now, good men, your sins may God forgive 420  
 And keep you specially from avarice!  
 My holy pardon will avail in this,  
 For it can heal each one of you that brings  
 His pennies, silver brooches, spoons, or rings.  
 Come, bow your head under this holy bull! 425  
 You wives, come offer up your cloth or wool!  
 I write your names here in my roll, just so.  
 Into the bliss of heaven you shall go!  
 I will absolve you here by my high power,  
 You that will offer, as clean as in the hour 430



When you were born.—Sirs, thus I preach. And now  
Christ Jesus, our souls' healer, show you how  
Within his pardon evermore to rest,  
For that, I will not lie to you, is best.

But in my tale, sirs, I forgot one thing. 435  
The relics and the pardons that I bring  
Here in my pouch, no man in the whole land  
Has finer, given me by the pope's own hand.  
If any of you devoutly wants to offer  
And have my absolution, come and proffer 440  
Whatever you have to give. Kneel down right here,  
Humbly, and take my pardon, full and clear,  
Or have a new, fresh pardon if you like  
At the end of every mile of road we strike,  
As long as you keep offering ever newly 445  
Good coins, not counterfeit, but minted truly.  
Indeed it is an honor I confer  
On each of you, an authentic pardoner  
Going along to absolve you as you ride.  
For in the country mishaps may betide— 450  
One or another of you in due course  
May break his neck by falling from his horse.  
Think what security it gives you all  
That in this company I chanced to fall!  
Who can absolve you each, both low and high, 455  
When the soul, alas, shall from the body fly!  
By my advice, our Host here shall begin,  
For he's the man enveloped most by sin.  
Come, offer first, Sir Host, and once that's done,  
Then you shall kiss the relics, every one, 460  
Yes, for a penny! Come, undo your purse!  
"No, no," said he. "Then I should have Christ's curse!  
I'll do nothing of the sort, for love or riches!  
You'd make me kiss a piece of your old britches  
And for a saintly relic make it pass 465  
Although it had the tincture of your ass.  
By the cross St. Helen found in the Holy Land,  
I wish I had your balls here in my hand  
For relics! Cut 'em off, and I'll be bound  
If I don't help you carry them around. 470  
I'll have the things enshrined in a hog's turd!"

The Pardoner did not answer; not a word,  
He was so angry, could he find to say.

467. *St. Helen*: mother of Constantine the Great; believed to have found the True Cross.

"Now," said our Host, "I will not try to play  
With you, nor any other angry man."

475

Immediately the worthy Knight began,  
When he saw that all the people laughed, "No more,  
This has gone far enough. Now as before,  
Sir Pardoner, be gay, look cheerfully,  
And you, Sir Host, who are so dear to me,  
Come, kiss the Pardoner, I beg of you,  
And Pardoner, draw near, and let us do  
As we've been doing, let us laugh and play."  
And so they kissed, and rode along their way.

480

[*The Knight's Interruption of the Monk's Tale*]\*

"Stop!" cried the Knight. "No more of this, good sir!  
You have said plenty, and much more, for sure,  
For only a little such lugubriousness  
Is plenty for a lot of folk, I guess.  
I say for me it is a great displeasure,  
When men have wealth and comfort in good measure,  
To hear how they have tumbled down the slope,  
And the oppositc is a solace and a hope,  
As when a man begins in low estate  
And climbs the ladder and grows fortunate,  
And stands there firm in his prosperity.  
That is a welcome thing, it seems to me,  
And of such things it would be good to tell."

5

10

"Well said," our Host declared. "By St. Paul's bell,  
You speak the truth; this Monk's tongue is too loud.  
He told how fortune covered with a cloud—  
I don't know what-all; and of tragedy  
You heard just now, and it's no remedy,  
When things are over and done with, to complain.  
Besides, as you have said, it is a pain  
To hear of misery; it is distressing.  
Sir Monk, no more, as you would have God's blessing.  
This company is all one weary sigh.  
Such talking isn't worth a butterfly,  
For where's the amusement in it, or the game?  
And so, Sir Monk, or Don Pierce by your name,  
I beg you heartily, tell us something else.  
Truly, but for the jingling of your bells  
That from your bridle hang on every side,  
By Heaven's King, who was born for us and died,

15

20

25

30

\* From *The Portable Chaucer* (Viking Press). Copyright 1949 by Theodore Morrison.

I should long since have tumbled down in sleep,  
Although the mud had never been so deep,  
And then you would have told your tale in vain;  
For certainly, as these learned men explain,  
When his audience have turned their backs away, 35  
It doesn't matter what a man may say.

I know well I shall have the essence of it  
If anything is told here for our profit.  
A tale of hunting, sir, pray share with us."  
"No," said the Monk, "I'll not be frivolous. 40  
Let another tell a tale, as I have told."

Then spoke our Host, with a rude voice and bold,  
And said to the Nun's Priest, "Come over here,  
You priest, come hither, you Sir John, draw near!  
Tell us a thing to make our spirits glad. 45  
Be cheerful, though the jade you ride is bad.  
What if your horse is miserable and lean?  
If he will carry you, don't care a bean!  
Keep up a joyful heart, and look alive."

"Yes, Host," he answered, "as I hope to thrive, 50  
If I weren't merry, I know I'd be reproached."  
And with no more ado his tale he broached,  
And this is what he told us, every one;  
This precious priest, this goodly man, Sir John.

*The Nun's Priest's Tale\**

Once a poor widow, aging year by year,  
Lived in a tiny cottage that stood near  
A clump of shade trees rising in a dale.  
This widow, of whom I tell you in my tale,  
Since the last day that she had been a wife 5  
Had led a very patient, simple life.  
She had but few possessions to content her.  
By thrift and husbandry of what God sent her  
She and two daughters found the means to dine.  
She had no more than three well-fattened swine, 10  
As many cows, and one sheep, Moll by name.  
Her bower and hall were black from the hearth-flame  
Where she had eaten many a slender meal.  
No dainty morsel did her palate feel  
And no sharp sauce was needed with her pottage. 15  
Her table was in keeping with her cottage.  
Excess had never given her disquiet.

\* From *The Portable Chaucer* (Viking Press). Copyright 1949 by Theodore Morrison.

Her only doctor was a moderate diet,  
 And exercise, and a heart that was contented.  
 If she did not dance, at least no gout prevented; 30  
 No apoplexy had destroyed her head.  
 She never drank wine, whether white or red.  
 She served brown bread and milk, loaves white or black,  
 Singed bacon, all this with no sense of lack,  
 And now and then an egg or two. In short, 35  
 She was a dairy woman of a sort.

She had a yard, on the inside fenced about  
 With hedges, and an empty ditch without,  
 In which she kept a cock, called Chanticleer.  
 In all the realm of crowing he had no peer. 30  
 His voice was merrier than the merry sound  
 Of the church organ grumbling out its ground  
 Upon a saint's day. Stouter was this cock  
 In crowing than the loudest abbey clock.  
 Of astronomy instinctively aware, 35  
 He kept the sun's hours with celestial care,  
 For when through each fifteen degrees it moved,  
 He crowed so that it couldn't be improved.  
 His comb, like a crenelated castle wall,  
 Red as fine coral, stood up proud and tall. 40  
 His bill was black; like polished jet it glowed,  
 And he was azure-legged and azure-toed.  
 As lilies were his nails, they were so white;  
 Like burnished gold his hue, it shone so bright.  
 This cock had in his princely sway and measure 45  
 Seven hens to satisfy his every pleasure,  
 Who were his sisters and his sweethearts true,  
 Each wonderfully like him in her hue,  
 Of whom the fairest-feathered throat to see  
 Was fair Dame Partlet. Courteous was she, 50  
 Discreet, and always acted debonairly.  
 She was sociable, and bore herself so fairly,  
 Since the very time that she was seven nights old,  
 The heart of Chanticleer was in her hold  
 As if she had him locked up, every limb. 55  
 He loved her so that all was well with him.  
 It was a joy, when up the sun would spring,  
 To hear them both together sweetly sing,  
 "My love has gone to the country, far away!"  
 For as I understand it, in that day 60  
 The animals and birds could sing and speak.  
 Now as this cock, one morning at daybreak,

With each of the seven hens that he called spouse,  
Sat on his perch inside the widow's house,  
And next him fair Dame Partlet, in his throat 65  
This Chanticleer produced a hideous note  
And groaned like a man who is having a bad dream;  
And Partlet, when she heard her husband scream,  
Was all aghast, and said, "Soul of my passion,  
What ails you that you groan in such a fashion? 70  
You are always a sound sleeper. Fie, for shame!"

And Chanticleer awoke and answered, "Dame,  
Take no offense, I beg you, on this score.  
I dreamt, by God, I was in a plight so sore  
Just now, my heart still quivers from the fright. 75  
Now God see that my dream turns out all right  
And keep my flesh and body from foul seizure!  
I dreamed I was strutting in our yard at leisure  
When there I saw, among the weeds and vines,  
A beast, he was like a hound, and had designs 80  
Upon my person, and would have killed me dead.  
His coat was not quite yellow, not quite red,  
And both his ears and tail were tipped with black  
Unlike the fur along his sides and back. ;  
He had a small snout and a fiery eye. ; 85  
His look for fear still makes me almost die.  
This is what made me groan, I have no doubt."

"For shame! Fie on you, faint heart!" she burst out.  
"Alas," she said, "by the great God above,  
Now you have lost my heart and all my love! 90  
I cannot love a coward, as I'm blest!  
Whatever any woman may protest,  
We all want, could it be so, for our part,  
Husbands who are wise and stout of heart,  
No blabber, and no niggard, and no fool, 95  
Nor afraid of every weapon or sharp tool,  
No braggart either, by the God above!  
How dare you say, for shame, to your true love  
That there is anything you ever feared?  
Have you no man's heart, when you have a beard? 100  
Alas, and can a nightmare set you screaming?  
God knows there's only vanity in dreaming!  
Dreams are produced by such unseemly capers  
As overeating; they come from stomach vapors  
When a man's humors aren't behaving right 105  
From some excess. This dream you had tonight,  
It comes straight from the superfluity

Of your red choler, certain as can be,  
 That causes people terror in their dreams  
 Of darts and arrows, and fire in red streams, 110  
 And of red beasts, for fear that they will bite,  
 Of little dogs, or of being in a fight;  
 As in the humor of melancholy lies  
 The reason why so many a sleeper cries  
 For fear of a black bull or a black bear 115  
 Or that black devils have him by the hair.  
 Through other humors also I could go  
 That visit many a sleeping man with woe,  
 But I will finish as quickly as I can.

"Cato, that has been thought so wise a man,  
 Didn't he tell us, 'Put no stock in dreams'? 120  
 Now, sir," she said, "when we fly down from our beams,  
 For God's sake, go and take a laxative!  
 On my salvation, as I hope to live,  
 I give you good advice, and no mere folly: 125  
 Purge both your choler and your melancholy!  
 You mustn't wait or let yourself bog down,  
 And since there is no druggist in this town  
 I shall myself prescribe for what disturbs  
 Your humors, and instruct you in the herbs 130  
 That will be good for you. For I shall find  
 Here in our yard herbs of the proper kind  
 For purging you both under and above.  
 Don't let this slip your mind, for God's own love!  
 Yours is a very choleric complexion. 135  
 When the sun is in the ascendant, my direction  
 Is to beware those humors that are hot.  
 Avoid excess of them; if you should not,  
 I'll bet a penny, as a true believer,  
 You'll die of ague, or a tertian fever. 140  
 A day or so, if you do as I am urging,  
 You shall have worm-digestives, before purging  
 With fumitory or with hellebore  
 Or other herbs that grow here by the score;  
 With caper-spurge, or with the goat-tree berry 145  
 Or the ground-ivy, found in our yard so merry.  
 Peck 'em up just as they grow, and eat 'em in!  
 Be cheerful, husband, by your father's kin!  
 Don't worry about a dream. I say no more."

"Madame," he answered, "thanks for all your lore. 150

108. *choler*: one of the four humors,  
 or fluids, composing the body, according  
 to ancient medical theory.

140. *tertian*: recurring every third  
 day.

But still, to speak of Cato, though his name  
 For wisdom has enjoyed so great a fame,  
 And though he counseled us there was no need  
 To be afraid of dreams, by God, men read  
 Of many a man of more authority 155  
 Than this Don Cato could pretend to be  
 Who in old books declare the opposite,  
 And by experience they have settled it,  
 That dreams are omens and prefigurations  
 Both of good fortune and of tribulations 160  
 That life and its vicissitudes present.  
 This question leaves no room for argument.  
 The very upshot makes it plain, indeed.

“One of the greatest authors that men read  
 Informs us that two fellow travelers went, 165  
 Once on a time, and with the best intent,  
 Upon a pilgrimage, and it fell out  
 They reached a town where there was such a rout  
 Of people, and so little lodging space,  
 They could not find even the smallest place 170  
 Where they could both put up. So, for that night,  
 These pilgrims had to do as best they might,  
 And since they must, they parted company.  
 Each of them went off to his hostelry  
 And took his lodging as his luck might fall. 175  
 Among plow oxen in a farmyard stall  
 One of them found a place, though it was rough.  
 His friend and fellow was lodged well enough  
 As his luck would have it, or his destiny  
 That governs all us creatures equally. 180  
 And so it happened, long before the day,  
 He had a dream as in his bed he lay.  
 He dreamed that his parted friend began to call  
 And said, ‘Alas, for in an ox’s stall  
 This night I shall be murdered where I lie. 185  
 Come to my aid, dear brother, or I die.  
 Come to me quickly, come in haste!’ he said.  
 He started from his sleep, this man, for dread,  
 But when he had wakened, he rolled back once more  
 And on this dream of his he set no store. 190  
 As a vain thing he dismissed it, unconcerned.  
 Twice as he slept that night the dream returned,  
 And still another and third time his friend

151 ff. to speak of Cato . . . : In . . . nounced in favor of the truth of  
 refuting Cato, Chanticleer gives a long dreams.  
 account of authorities who have pro-

Came in a dream and said, 'I have met my end!  
 Look on my wounds! They are bloody, deep, and wide. 195  
 Now rise up early in the morningtide  
 And at the west gate of the town,' said he,  
 'A wagon with a load of dung you'll see.  
 Have it arrested boldly. Do as bidden,  
 For underneath you'll find my body hidden. 200  
 My money caused my murder, truth to tell,'  
 And told him each detail of how he fell,  
 With piteous face, and with a bloodless hue.  
 And do not doubt it, he found the dream was true,  
 For on the morrow, as soon as it was day, 205  
 To the place where his friend had lodged he made his way,  
 And no sooner did he reach this ox's stall  
 Than for his fellow he began to call.

"Promptly the stableman replied, and said,  
 'Your friend is gone, sir. He got out of bed 210  
 And left the town as soon as day began.'

"At last suspicion overtook this man.  
 Remembering his dreams, he would not wait,  
 But quickly went and found at the west gate,  
 Being driven to manure a farmer's land 215  
 As it might seem, a dung cart close at hand  
 That answered the description every way,  
 As you yourself have heard the dead man say.  
 And he began to shout courageously  
 For law and vengeance on this felony. 220  
 'My friend was killed this very night! He lies  
 Flat in this load of dung, with staring eyes.  
 I call on those who should keep rule and head,  
 The magistrates and governors here,' he said.  
 'Alas! Here lies my fellow, done to death!' 225

"Why on this tale should I waste further breath?  
 The people sprang and flung the cart to ground  
 And in the middle of the dung they found  
 The dead man, while his murder was still new.

"O blessed God, thou art so just and true, 230  
 Murder, though secret, ever thou wilt betray!  
 Murder will out, we see it day by day.  
 Murder so loathsome and abominable  
 To God is, who is just and reasonable,  
 That he will never suffer it to be 235  
 Concealed, though it hide a year, or two, or three.  
 Murder will out; to this point it comes down.

"Promptly the magistrates who ruled that town



Have seized the driver, and put him to such pain.  
 And the stableman as well, that under strain 240  
 Of torture they were both led to confess  
 And hanged by the neck-bone for their wickedness.  
 "Here's proof enough that dreams are things to dread!  
 And in the same book I have also read,  
 In the very chapter that comes right after this— 245  
 I don't speak idly, by my hope of bliss—  
 Two travelers who for some reason planned  
 To cross the ocean to a distant land  
 Found that the wind, by an opposing fate,  
 Blew contrary, and forced them both to wait 250  
 In a fair city by a harborside.  
 But one day the wind changed, toward eventide,  
 And blew just as it suited them instead.  
 Cheerfully these travelers went to bed  
 And planned to sail the first thing in the morning. 255  
 But to one of them befell a strange forewarning  
 And a great marvel. While asleep he lay,  
 He dreamed a curious dream along toward day.  
 He dreamed that a man appeared at his bedside  
 And told him not to sail, but wait and bide. 260  
 'Tomorrow,' he told the man, 'if you set sail,  
 You shall be drowned. I have told you my whole tale.'  
 He woke, and of this warning he had met  
 He told his friend, and begged him to forget  
 His voyage, and to wait that day and bide. 265  
 His friend, who was lying close at his bedside,  
 Began to laugh, and told him in derision;  
 'I am not so flabbergasted by a vision  
 As to put off my business for such cause.  
 I do not think your dream is worth two straws! 270  
 For dreams are but a vain absurdity.  
 Of apes and owls and many a mystery  
 People are always dreaming, in a maze  
 Of things that never were seen in all their days  
 And never shall be. But I see it's clear 275  
 You mean to waste your time by waiting here.  
 I'm sorry for that, God knows; and so good day.'  
 With this he took his leave and went his way.  
 But not the half his course had this man sailed—  
 I don't know why, nor what it was that failed— 280  
 When by an accident the hull was rent  
 And ship and man under the water went  
 In full view of the vessels alongside

That had put out with them on the same tide.  
 Now then, fair Partlet, whom I love so well, 285  
 From old examples such as these I tell  
 You may see that none should give too little heed  
 To dreams; for I say seriously, indeed,  
 That many a dream is too well worth our dread.  
 "Yes, in St. Kenelm's life I have also read— 290  
 He was the son of Cynewulf, the king  
 Of Mercia—how this Kenelm dreamed a thing.  
 One day, as the time when he was killed drew near,  
 He saw his murder in a dream appear.  
 His nurse explained his dream in each detail, 295  
 And warned him to be wary without fail  
 Of treason; yet he was but seven years old,  
 And therefore any dream he could but hold  
 Of little weight, in heart he was so pure.  
 I'd give my shirt, by God, you may be sure, 300  
 If you had read his story through like me!  
 "Moreover, Partlet, I tell you truthfully,  
 Macrobius writes—and by his book we know  
 The African vision of great Scipio—  
 Confirming dreams, and holds that they may be 305  
 Forewarnings of events that men shall see.  
 Again, I beg, look well at what is meant  
 By the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament,  
 Whether *he* held that dreams are vanity!  
 Read also about Joseph. You shall see 310  
 That dreams, or some of them—I don't say all—  
 Warn us of things that afterward befall.  
 Think of the king of Egypt, Don Pharaoh;  
 Of his butler and his baker think also,  
 Whether they found that dreams have no result. 315  
 Whoever will search through kingdoms and consult  
 Their histories reads many a wondrous thing  
 Of dreams. What about Croesus, Lydian king—  
 Didn't he dream he was sitting on a tree,  
 Which meant he would be hanged? Andromache, 320  
 The woman who was once great Hector's wife,  
 On the day that Hector was to lose his life,  
 The very night before his blood was spilled  
 She dreamed of how her husband would be killed  
 If he went out to battle on that day. 325  
 She warned him; but he would not heed nor stay.  
 In spite of her he rode out on the plain,  
 And by Achilles he was promptly slain.

But all that story is too long to tell,  
 And it is nearly day. I must not dwell 330  
 Upon this matter. Briefly, in conclusion,  
 I say this dream will bring me to confusion  
 And mischief of some sort. And furthermore,  
 On laxatives, I say, I set no store,  
 For they are poisonous, I'm sure of it. 335  
 I do not trust them! I like them not one bit!

"Now let's talk cheerfully, and forget all this.  
 My pretty Partlet, by my hope of bliss,  
 In one thing God has sent me ample grace,  
 For when I see the beauty of your face, 340  
 You are so scarlet-red about the eye,  
 It is enough to make my terrors die.

For just as true as *In principio*  
*Mulier est hominis confusio*—  
 And Madame, what this Latin means is this: 345  
 'Woman is man's whole comfort and true bliss'—  
 When I feel you soft at night, and I beside you,  
 Although it's true, alas, I cannot ride you  
 Because our perch is built so narrowly,  
 I am then so full of pure felicity 350  
 That I defy whatever sort of dream!"

And day being come, he flew down from the beam,  
 And with him his hens fluttered, *one* and all;  
 And with a "cluck, cluck" he began to call  
 His wives to where a kernel had been tossed. 355  
 He was a prince, his fears entirely lost.  
 The morning had not passed the hour of prime  
 When he treaded Partlet for the twentieth time.  
 Grim as a lion he strolled to and fro,  
 And strutted only on his either toe. 360  
 He would not deign to set foot on the ground.  
 "Cluck, cluck," he said, whenever he had found  
 A kernel, and his wives came running all.  
 Thus royal as a monarch in his hall  
 I leave to his delights this Chanticleer, 365  
 And presently the sequel you shall hear.

After the month in which the world began,  
 The month of March, when God created man,  
 Had passed, and when the season had run through  
 Since March began just thirty days and two, 370  
 It happened that Chanticleer, in all his pride,

343-344. *In . . . confusio*: As sure  
 as gospel, woman is man's ruin.

368. *The month . . . man*: Man  
 was thought to have been created at  
 the time of the spring equinox.

While his seven hens were walking by his side,  
 Lifted his eyes, beholding the bright sun,  
 Which in the sign of Taurus had then run  
 Twenty and one degrees and somewhat more, 375  
 And knew by instinct, not by learned lore,  
 It was the hour of prime. He raised his head  
 And crowed with lordly voice. "The sun," he said,  
 "Forty and one degrees and more in height  
 Has climbed the sky. Partlet, my world's delight, 380  
 Hear all these birds, how happily they sing,  
 And see the pretty flowers, how they spring.  
 With solace and with joy my spirits dancel"  
 But suddenly he met a sore mischance,  
 For in the end joys ever turn to wocs. 385  
 Quickly the joys of earth are gone, God knows,  
 And could a rhetorician's art indite it,  
 He would be on solid ground if he should write it,  
 In a chronicle, as true notoriously!  
 Now every wise man, listen well to me. 390  
 This story is as true, I undertake,  
 As the very book of Lancelot of the Lake  
 On which the women set so great a store.  
 Now to my matter I will turn once more.  
 A sly iniquitous fox, with black-tipped ears, 395  
 Who had lived in the neighboring wood for some three years,  
 His fated fancy swollen to a height,  
 Had broken through the hedges that same night  
 Into the yard where in his pride sublime  
 Chanticleer with his seven wives passed the time. 400  
 Quietly in a bed of herbs he lay  
 Till it was past the middle of the day,  
 Waiting his hour on Chanticleer to fall  
 As gladly do these murderers, one and all,  
 Who lie in wait, concealed, to murder men. 405  
 O murderer, lurking traitorous in your den!  
 O new Iscariot, second Ganelon,  
 False hypocrite, Greek Sinon, who brought on  
 The utter woe of Troy and all her sorrow!  
 O Chanticleer, accused be that morrow 410  
 When to the yard you flew down from the beams!  
 That day, as you were well warned in your dreams,  
 Would threaten you with dire catastrophe.  
 But that which God foresees must come to be,

377. *prime*: nine.407. *Ganelon*: traitor in the Song

of Roland.

408. *Sinon*: traitor at Troy.

As there are certain scholars who aver. 415  
 Bear witness, any true philosopher,  
 That in the schools there has been great altercation  
 Upon this question, and much disputation  
 By a hundred thousand scholars, man for man.  
 I cannot sift it down to the pure bran 420  
 As can the sacred Doctor, Augustine,  
 Or Boëthius, or Bishop Bradwardine,  
 Whether God's high forcknowledge so enchains me  
 I needs must do a thing as it constrains me—  
 "Needs must"—that is, by plain necessity; 425  
 Or whether a free choice is granted me  
 To do it or not do it, either one,  
 Though God must know all things before they are done;  
 Or whether his foresight nowise can constrain  
 Except contingently, as some explain; 430  
 I will not labor such a high concern.  
 My tale is of a cock, as you shall learn,  
 Who took his wife's advice, to his own sorrow,  
 And walked out in the yard that fatal morrow.  
 Women have many times, as wise men hold, 435  
 Offered advice that left men in the cold.  
 A woman's counsel brought us first to woe  
 And out of Paradise made Adam go  
 Where he lived a merry life and one of ease.  
 But since I don't know whom I may displease 440  
 By giving women's words an ill report,  
 Pass over it; I only spoke in sport.  
 There are books about it you can read or skim in,  
 And you'll discover what they say of women.  
 I'm telling you the cock's words, and not mine. 445  
 Harm in no woman at all can I divine.  
 Merrily bathing where the sand was dry  
 Lay Partlet, with her sisters all near by,  
 And Chanticleer, as regal as could be,  
 Sang merrily as the mermaid in the sea; 450  
 For the *Physiologus* itself declares  
 That they know how to sing the merriest airs.  
 And so it happened that as he fixed his eye  
 Among the herbs upon a butterfly,  
 He caught sight of this fox who crouched there low. 455

421-422. *Augustine*: St. Augustine (354-430), the great Church Father. *Boëthius*: author of the *Consolation of Philosophy* (*De consolazione philosophiae*), one of the most popular works of the Middle Ages; written in the

early sixth century. *Bradwardine*: archbishop of Canterbury in Chaucer's boyhood.

451. *Physiologus*: a collection of nature lore.

He felt no impulse then to strut or crow,  
 But cried "cuckoo!" and gave a fearful start  
 Like a man who has been frightened to the heart.  
 For instinctively, if he should chance to see  
 His opposite, a beast desires to flee,  
 Even the first time that it meets his eye.

460

This Chanticleer, no sooner did he spy  
 The fox than promptly enough he would have fled.  
 But "Where are you going, kind sir?" the fox said.  
 "Are you afraid of me, who am your friend?"

465

Truly, I'd be a devil from end to end  
 If I meant you any harm or villainy.

I have not come to invade your privacy.  
 In truth, the only reason that could bring  
 This visit of mine was just to hear you sing.

470

Beyond a doubt, you have as fine a voice  
 As any angel who makes heaven rejoice.  
 Also you have more feeling in your note  
 Than Boëthius, or any tuneful throat.

Milord your father once—and may God bless  
 His soul—your noble mother too, no less,  
 Have been inside my house, to my great ease.

475

And verily sir, I should be glad to please  
 You also. But for singing, I declare,

As I enjoy my eyes, that precious pair,  
 Save you, I never heard a man so sing  
 As your father did when night was on the wing.  
 Straight from the heart, in truth, came all his song,  
 And to make his voice more resonant and strong

480

He would strain until he shut his either eye,  
 So loud and lordly would he make his cry,

485

And stand up on his tiptoes therewithal  
 And stretch his neck till it grew long and small.

He had such excellent discretion, too,  
 That whether his singing, all the region through,  
 Or his wisdom, there was no one to surpass.

490

I read in that old book, *Don Burnel the Ass*,  
 Among his verses once about a cock

Hit on the leg by a priest who threw a rock  
 When he was young and foolish; and for this  
 He caused the priest to lose his benefice.

495

474. *Boëthius*: He was also author of a treatise on music.

492. *Don Burnel the Ass*: a twelfth-century Latin work by the Englishman

Nigel Wireker.

496. *He . . . benefice*: by failing to wake him with his crowing.

But no comparison, in all truth, lies  
Between your father, so prudent and so wise,  
And this other cock, for all his subtlety.  
Sing, sir! Show me, for holy charity, 500  
Can you imitate your father, that wise man?"

Blind to all treachery, Chanticleer began  
To beat his wings, like one who cannot see  
The traitor, ravished by his flattery.

Alas, you lords, about your court there slips 505  
Many a flatterer with deceiving lips  
Who can please you more abundantly, I fear,  
Than he who speaks the plain truth to your ear.  
Read in Ecclesiastes, you will see  
What flatterers are. Lords, heed their treachery! 510

This Chanticleer stood tiptoe at full height.  
He stretched his neck, he shut his eyelids tight,  
And he began to crow a lordly note.  
The fox, Don Russell, seized him by the throat  
At once, and on his back bore Chanticleer 515  
Off toward his den that in the grove stood near,  
For no one yet had threatened to pursue.

O destiny, that no man may eschew!  
Alas, that he left his safe perch on the beams!  
Alas, that Partlet took no stock in dreams! 520  
And on a Friday happened this mischance!

Venus, whose pleasures make the whole world dance,  
Since Chanticleer was ever your true servant,  
And of your rites with all his power observant  
For pleasure rather than to multiply, 525  
Would you on Friday suffer him to die?

Geoffrey, dear master of the poet's art,  
Who when your Richard perished by a dart  
Made for your king an elegy so burning,  
Why have I not your eloquence and learning 530  
To chide, as you did, with a heart so filled,  
Fridays? For on a Friday he was killed.  
Then should I show you how I could complain  
For Chanticleer in all his fright and pain!

In truth, no lamentation ever rose, 535  
No shriek of ladies when before its foes  
Ilium fell, and Pyrrhus with drawn blade

509. *Ecclesiastes*: This should apparently be *Ecclesiasticus* (a book of the Old Testament Apocrypha) 12:10 ff; 27:26.

527. *Geoffrey*: Geoffrey de Vinsauf, author of a treatise on poetry, with specimens, among them an elegy on Richard I.

Had seized King Priam by the beard and made  
 An end of him—the *Aeneid* tells the tale—  
 Such as the hens made with their piteous wail 540  
 In their enclosure, seeing the dread sight  
 Of Chanticleer. But at the shrillest height  
 Shrieked Partlet. She shrieked louder than the wife  
 Of Hasdrubal, when her husband lost his life  
 And the Romans burned down Carthage; for her state 545  
 Of torment and of frenzy was so great  
 She willfully chose the fire for her part,  
 Leaped in, and burned herself with steadfast heart.

Unhappy hens, you shrieked as when for pity,  
 While the tyrant Nero put to flames the city 550  
 Of Rome, rang out the shriek of senators' wives  
 Because their husbands had all lost their lives;  
 This Nero put to death these innocent men.  
 But I will come back to my tale again.

Now this good widow and her two daughters heard 555  
 These woful hens shriek when the crime occurred,  
 And sprang outdoors as quickly as they could  
 And saw the fox, who was making for the wood  
 Bearing this Chanticleer across his back.

"Help, help!" they cried. They cried, "Alas! Alack! 560  
 The fox, the fox!" and after him they ran,  
 And armed with clubs came running many a man.

Ran Coll the dog, and led a yelping band;  
 Ran Malkyn, with a distaff in her hand;  
 Ran cow and calf, and even the very hogs, 565  
 By the yelping and the barking of the dogs  
 And men's and women's shouts so terrified

They ran till it seemed their hearts would burst inside;  
 They squealed like fiends in the pit, with none to still them.  
 The ducks quacked as if men were going to kill them. 570

The geese for very fear flew over the trees.  
 Out of the beehive came the swarm of bees.  
 Ah! Bless my soul, the noise, by all that's true,  
 So hideous was that Jack Straw's retinue  
 Made never a hubbub that was half so shrill 575  
 Over a Fleming they were going to kill  
 As the clamor made that day over the fox.

They brought brass trumpets, and trumpets made of box,

539. *Aeneid*: Book II, ll. 550 ff.  
 544. *Hasdrubal*: king of Carthage  
 (second century B.C.).

574. *Jack Straw*: leader of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, caused in part by the competition in labor of immigrating Flemings.



Of horn, of bone, on which they blew and squeaked,  
And those who were not blowing whooped and shrieked. 580  
It seemed as if the very heavens would fall!

Now hear me, you good people, one and all!  
Fortune, I say, will suddenly override  
Her enemy in his very hope and pride!  
This cock, as on the fox's back he lay, 585  
Plucked up his courage to speak to him and say.  
"God be my help, sir, but I'd tell them all,  
That is, if I were you, 'Plague on you fall!  
Go back, proud fools! Now that I've reached the wood,  
I'll eat the cock at once, for all the good 590  
Your noise can do. Here Chanticleer shall stay.' "

"Fine!" said the fox. "I'll do just what you say."  
But the cock, as he was speaking, suddenly  
Out of his jaws lurched expeditiously,  
And flew at once high up into a tree. 595  
And when the fox saw that the cock was free,  
"Alas," he said, "alas, O Chanticleer!  
Inasmuch as I have given you cause for fear  
By seizing you and bearing you away,  
I have done you wrong, I am prepared to say. 600  
But, sir, I did it with no ill intent.  
Come down, and I shall tell you ~~what~~ I meant.  
So help me God, it's truth I'll offer ~~you~~!"

"No, no," said he. "We're both ~~fools~~, through and through.  
But curse my blood and bones for ~~the~~ chief dunce 605  
If you deceive me oftener than ~~once~~!  
You shall never again by flattery persuade me  
To sing and wink my eyes, by him that made me.  
For he that willfully winks when he should see,  
God never bless him with prosperity!" 610

"Ah," said the fox, "with mischief may God greet  
The man ungoverned, rash, and indiscreet  
Who babbles when to hold his tongue were needful!"  
Such is it to be reckless and unheedful  
And trust in flattery. But you who hold 615  
That this is a mere trifle I have told,  
Concerning only a fox, or a cock and hen,  
Think twice, and take the moral, my good men!  
For truly, of whatever is written, all  
Is written for our doctrine, says St. Paul. 620  
Then take the fruit, and let the chaff lie still.

Now, gracious God, if it should be your will,  
 As my Lord teaches, make us all good men  
 And bring us to your holy bliss! Amen.

## SIR THOMAS MALORY

(1410?–1471)

Le Morte d'Arthur\*

Book I

## CHAPTER 5

*How Arthur was chosen king, and of wonders and marvels of a sword taken out of a stone by the said Arthur*

Then stood the realm in great jeopardy long while, for every lord that was mighty of men made him strong, and many weened to have been king. Then Merlin went to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and counselled him for to send for all the lords of the realm, and all the gentlemen of arms, that they should to London come by Christmas, upon pain of cursing; and for this cause, that Jesus, that was born on that night, that he would of his great mercy show some miracle, as he was come to be king of mankind, for to show [by] some miracle who should be rightways king of this realm. So the Archbishop, by the advice of Merlin, sent for all the lords and gentlemen of arms that they should come by Christmas even unto London. And many of them made them clean of their life, that their prayer might be the more acceptable unto God. So in the greatest church of London, whether it were Paul's or not the French book maketh no mention, all the estates were long or<sup>1</sup> day in the church for to pray. And when matins and the first mass was done, there was seen in the churchyard, against the high altar, a great stone four square, like unto a marble stone, and in midst thereof was like an anvil of steel a foot on high, and therein stuck a fair sword naked by the point, and letters there were written in gold about the sword that said thus:—Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England. Then the people marvelled, and told it to the Archbishop. I command, said the Archbishop, that ye keep you within your church, and pray unto God still; that no man touch the sword till the high mass be all done. So when all masses were done all the lords went to behold the stone and the sword. And when they saw the scripture,<sup>2</sup> some assayed;<sup>3</sup> such as would have been king. But none might stir

\* Completed about 1470; printed by  
 Caxton in 1485.

1. before

2. inscription.

3. tried.

the sword nor move it. He is not here, said the Archbishop, that shall achieve the sword, but doubt not God will make him known. But this is my counsel, said the Archbishop, that we let purvey<sup>4</sup> ten knights, men of good fame, and they to keep this sword. So it was ordained, and then there was made a cry, that every man should assay that would, for to win the sword. And upon New Year's Day the barons let make a joust<sup>5</sup> and a tournament, that all knights that would joust or tourney there might play, and all this was ordained for to keep the lords and the commons together, for the Archbishop trusted that God would make him known that should win the sword. So upon New Year's Day, when the service was done, the barons rode unto the field, some to joust and some to tourney, and so it happened that Sir Ector, that had great livelihood about London, rode unto the jousts, and with him rode Sir Kay his son, and young Arthur that was his nourished brother;<sup>6</sup> and Sir Kay was made knight at All Hallowmass afore. So as they rode to the joustward, Sir Kay had lost his sword, for he had left it at his father's lodging, and so he praycd young Arthur for to ride for his sword. I will well, said Arthur, and rode fast after the sword, and when he came home, the lady and all were out to see the jousting. Then was Arthur wroth, and said to himself, I will ride to the churchyard, and take the sword with me that sticketh in the stone, for my brother Sir Kay shall not be without a sword this day. So when he came to the churchyard, Sir Arthur alit and tied his horse to the stile, and so he went to the tent, and found no knights there, for they were at jousting; and so he handled the sword by the handles, and lightly and fiercely pulled it out of the stone, and took his horse and rode his way until he came to his brother Sir Kay, and delivered him the sword. And as soon as Sir Kay saw the sword, he wist<sup>7</sup> well it was the sword of the stone, and so he rode to his father Sir Ector, and said: Sir, lo here is the sword of the stone, wherefore I must be king of this land. When Sir Ector beheld the sword, he returned again and came to the church, and there they alit all threc, and went into the church. And anon he made Sir Kay to swear upon a book how he came to that sword. Sir, said Sir Kay, by my brother Arthur, for he brought it to me. How gat ye this sword? said Sir Ector to Arthur. Sir, I will tell you. When I came home for my brother's sword, I found nobody at home to deliver me his sword, and so I thought my brother Sir Kay should not be swordless, and so I came hither eagerly and pulled it out of the stone without any pain. Found ye any knights about this sword? said Sir Ector. Nay, said Arthur. Now, said Sir Ector to Arthur, I understand ye must be king of

4. *let purvey*: provide.

5. *let make a joust*: caused a joust to be held.

6. foster brother.

7. knew.

this land. Wherefore I, said Arthur, and for what cause? Sir, said Ector, for God will have it so, for there should never man have drawn out this sword, but he that shall be rightways king of this land. Now let me see whether ye can put the sword there as it was, and pull it out again. That is no mastery,<sup>8</sup> said Arthur, and so he put it in the stone, therewithal Sir Ector assayed to pull out the sword and failed.

## CHAPTER 6

*How King Arthur pulled out the sword divers times*

Now assay, said Sir Ector unto Sir Kay. And anon he pulled at the sword with all his might, but it would not be. Now shall ye assay, said Sir Ector to Arthur. I will well, said Arthur, and pulled it out easily. And therewithal Sir Ector knelt down to the earth, and Sir Kay. Alas, said Arthur, my own dear father and brother, why kneel ye to me? Nay, nay, my lord Arthur, it is not so, I was never your father nor of your blood, but I wot well ye arc of an higher blood than I weened<sup>9</sup> ye were. And then Sir Ector told him all, how he was bitaken<sup>10</sup> him for to nourish him, and by whose commandment, and by Merlin's deliverance. Then Arthur made great doole<sup>11</sup> when he understood that Sir Ector was not his father. Sir, said Ector unto Arthur, will ye be my good and gracious lord when ye arc king? Else were I to blame, said Arthur, for ye arc the man in the world that I am most beholden to, and my good lady and mother your wife, that as well as her own hath fostered me and kept. And if ever it be God's will that I be king as ye say, ye shall desire of me what I may do, and I shall not fail you, God forbid I should fail you. Sir, said Sir Ector, I will ask no more of you, but that ye will make my son, your foster brother, Sir Kay, seneschal<sup>12</sup> of all your lands. That shall be done, said Arthur, and more, by the faith of my body, that never man shall have that office but he, while he and I live. Therewithal they went unto the Archbishop, and told him how the sword was achieved, and by whom; and on Twelfth-day all the barons came thither, and to assay to take the sword, who that would assay. But there afore them all, there might none take it out but Arthur; wherefore there were many lords wroth, and said it was great shame unto them all and the realm, to be over-governed with a boy of no high blood born, and so they fell out at that time that it was put off till Candlemas,<sup>13</sup> and then all the barons should meet there again; but always the ten knights were ordained to watch the sword day and night, and so

8. trick.

9. thought.

10. how Arthur was entrusted to Sir Ector.

11. sorrow (compare Modern Eng-

lish "dole").

12. a high official often charged with administration of the country in the king's name.

13. February 2.

they set a pavilion over the stone and the sword, and five always watched. So at Candlemas many more great lords came thither for to have won the sword, but there might none prevail. And right as Arthur did at Christmas, he did at Candlemas, and pulled out the sword easily, whereof the barons were sore aggrieved and put it off in delay till the high feast of Easter. And as Arthur sped<sup>14</sup> before, so did he at Easter, yet there were some of the great lords had indignation that Arthur should be king, and put it off in a delay till the feast of Pentecost.<sup>15</sup> Then the Archbishop of Canterbury by Merlin's providence let purvey then of the best knights that they might get, and such knights as Uther Pendragon loved best and most trusted in his days. And such knights were put about Arthur as Sir Baudwin of Britain, Sir Kay, Sir Ulfius, Sir Brastias. All these with many other, were always about Arthur, day and night, till the feast of Pentecost.

#### CHAPTER 7

##### *How King Arthur was crowned, and how he made office*

And at the feast of Pentecost all manner of men assayed to pull at the sword that would assay, but none might prevail but Arthur, and pulled it out afore all the lords and commons that were there, wherefore all the commons cried at once, We will have Arthur unto our king, we will put him no more in delay, for we all see that it is God's will that he shall be our king, and who that holdeth against it, we will slay him. And therewith they all kneced at once, both rich and poor, and cried Arthur mercy because they had delayed him so long, and Arthur forgave them, and took the sword between both his hands, and offered it upon the altar where the Archbishop was, and so was he made knight of<sup>16</sup> the best man that was there. And so anon was the coronation made. And there was he sworn unto his lords and the commons for to be a true king, to stand with true justice from thenceforth the days of this life. Also then he made all lords that held of the crown<sup>17</sup> to come in, and to do service as they ought to do. And many complaints were made unto Sir Arthur of great wrongs that were done since the death of King Uther, of many lands that were bereaved lords, knights, ladies and gentlemen. Wherefore King Arthur made the lands to be given again unto them that owned them. When this was done, that the king had stablished all the countries about London, then he let make Sir Kay seneschal of England; and Sir Baudwin of Britain was made constable; and Sir Ulfius was made chamberlain; and Sir Brastias was made warden to wait upon the north

14. succeeded.

15. seventh Sunday after Easter.

16. by.

17. held lands from the king.

from Trent forwards,<sup>18</sup> for it was that time the most party<sup>19</sup> the king's enemies. But within few years after, Arthur won all the north, Scotland, and all that were under their obeissance. Also Wales, a part of it held against Arthur, but he overcame them all, as he did the remnant, through the noble prowess of himself and his knights of the Round Table.

## Book XX

## CHAPTER 1

*How Sir Agravaïne and Sir Mordred were busy upon Sir Gawaine for to disclose the love between Sir Launcelot and Queen Guenever*

In May when every lusty heart flourisheth and burgeoneth, for as the season is lusty to behold and comfortable, so man and woman rejoice and gladden of summer coming with his fresh flowers; for winter with his rough winds and blasts causeth a lusty man and woman to cower, and sit fast by the fire. So in this season, as in the month of May, it befell a great anger and unhap<sup>20</sup> that stinted not till the flower of chivalry of all the world was destroyed and slain; and all was long upon<sup>21</sup> two unhappy knights,<sup>22</sup> the which were named Agravaïne and Sir Mordred, that were brethren unto Sir Gawaine. For this Sir Agravaïne and Sir Mordred had ever a privy hate unto the queen Dame Guenever and to Sir Launcelot, and daily and nightly they ever watched upon Sir Launcelot. So it mishapped, Sir Gawaine and all his brethren were in King Arthur's chamber; and then Sir Agravaïne said thus openly, and not in no counsel, that many knights might hear it: I marvel that we all be not ashamed both to see and to know how Sir Launcelot lieth daily and nightly by the queen, and all we know it so; and it is shamefully suffered of us all, that we all should suffer so noble a king as King Arthur is so to be shamed. Then spake Sir Gawaine, and said: Brother Sir Agravaïne, I pray you and charge you move no such matters no more afore me, for wit<sup>23</sup> you well, said Sir Gawaine, I will not be of your counsel. So God help me, said Sir Gaheris, and Sir Gareth, we will not be knowing, brother Agravaïne, of your deeds. Then will I, said Sir Mordred. I leave well that, said Sir Gawaine, for ever unto all unhappiness, brother Sir Mordred, thereto will ye grant; and I would that ye left all this, and made you not so busy, for I know, said Sir Gawaine, what will fall of it. Fall of it what fall may, said Sir Agra-

18. Sir Brastias was placed in charge of the defense of this part of the country.

19. the largest party of.

20. misfortune.

21. long upon: because of.

22. two knights whose deeds caused trouble.

23. know.

vaine, I will disclose it to the king. Not by my counsel, said Sir Gawaine, for an<sup>24</sup> there rise war and wrake<sup>25</sup> betwixt Sir Launcelot and us, wit you well, brother, there will many kings and great lords hold with Sir Launcelot. Also, brother Sir Agravaine, said Sir Gawaine, ye must remember how oftentimes Sir Launcelot hath rescued the king and the queen; and the best of us all had been full cold at the heart root had not Sir Launcelot been better than we, and that hath he proved himself full oft. And as for my part, said Sir Gawaine, I will never be against Sir Launcelot for one day's deed, when he rescued me from King Carados of the Dolorous Tower, and slew him, and saved my life. Also, brother Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred, in like wise Sir Launcelot rescued you both, and threescore and two, from Sir Turquin. Methinketh brother, such kind deeds and kindness should be remembered. Do as ye list,<sup>26</sup> said Sir Agravaine, for I will layne<sup>27</sup> it no longer. With these words came to them King Arthur. Now brother, stint your noise, said Sir Gawaine. We will not, said Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred. Will ye so? said Sir Gawaine; then God speed you, for I will not hear your tales ne<sup>28</sup> be of your counsel. No more will I, said Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris, for we will never say evil by that man; for by cause, said Sir Gareth, Sir Launcelot made me knight, by no manner owe I to say ill of him: and therewithal they three departed, making great dole. Alas, said Sir Gawaine and Sir Gareth, now is this realm wholly mischieved,<sup>29</sup> and the noble fellowship of the Round Table shall be disparply:<sup>30</sup> so they departed.

## CHAPTER 8

*How Sir Launcelot and his kinsmen rescued the queen from the fire, and how he slew many knights*

Then said the noble King Arthur to Sir Gawaine: Dear nephew, I pray you make you ready in your best armour, with your brethren, Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth, to bring my queen to the fire, there to have her judgement and receive the death. Nay, my most noble lord, said Sir Gawaine, that will I never do; for wit you well I will never be in that place where so noble a queen as is my lady, Dame Guenever, shall take a shameful end. For wit you well, said Sir Gawaine, my heart will never serve me to see her die; and it shall never be said that ever I was of your counsel of her death. Then said the king to Sir Gawaine: Suffer your brothers Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth to be there. My lord, said Sir Gawaine, wit you well

24. if.  
25. strife.  
26. please.  
27. conceal.

28. nor.  
29. impaired.  
30. dispersed.

they will be loath to be there present, by cause of many adventures the which be like there to fall, but they are young and full unable to say you nay. Then spake Sir Gaheris, and the good knight Sir Gareth, unto Sir Arthur: Sir, ye may well command us to be there, but wit you well it shall be sore against our will; but an we be there by your straight commandment ye shall plainly hold us excused: we will be there in peaccable wise, and bear none harness of war upon us. In the name of God, said the king, then make you ready, for she shall soon have her judgement anon. Alas, said Sir Gawaine, that ever I should endure to see this woeful day. So Sir Gawaine turned him and wept heartily, and so he went into his chamber; and then the queen was led forth without Carlisle,<sup>31</sup> and there she was despoiled into her smock.<sup>32</sup> And so then her ghostly father was brought to her, to be shriven<sup>33</sup> of her misdeeds. Then was there weeping, and wailing, and wringing of hands, of many lords and ladies, but there were but few in comparison that would bear any armour for to strength<sup>34</sup> the death of the queen. Then was there one that Sir Launcelot had sent unto that place for to espy what time the queen should go unto her death; and anon as he saw the queen despoiled into her smock, and so shriven, then he gave Sir Launcelot warning. Then was there but spurring and plucking up of horses, and right so they came to the fire. And who that stood against them, there were they slain; there might none withstand Sir Launcelot, so all that bare arms and withstood them, there were they slain, full many a noble knight. For there was slain Sir Belliance le Orgulous, Sir Segwarides, Sir Griflet, Sir Brandiles, Sir Aglovale, Sir Tor, Sir Gauter, Sir Gillimer, Sir Reynolds' three brethren; Sir Damas, Sir Priamus, Sir Kay the Stranger, Sir Driant, Sir Lambegus, Sir Herminde; Sir Pertilope, Sir Perimones, two brethren that were called the Green Knight and the Red Knight. And so in this rushing and hurling, as Sir Launcelot thrang<sup>35</sup> here and there, it mishapped him to slay Gaheris and Sir Gareth, the noble knights, for they were unarmed and unware. For as the French book saith, Sir Launcelot smote Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris upon the brain pans, wherethrough they were slain in the field; howbeit in very truth Sir Launcelot saw them not, and so were they found dead among the thickest of the press. Then when Sir Launcelot had thus done, and slain and put to flight all that would withstand him, then he rode straight unto Dame Guenever, and made a kirtle and a gown to be cast upon her; and then he made her to be set behind him, and prayed her to be of good cheer. Wit you well the queen was glad that she was escaped

31. outside Carlisle, a town.

32. Her queenly robes were taken off so that her only garment was a smock.

33. that she might be confessed (to a priest).

34. support.

35. pressed forward.



from the death. And then she thanked God and Sir Launcelot; and so he rode his way with the queen, as the French book saith, unto Joyous Gard, and there he kept her as a noble knight should do; and many great lords and some kings sent Sir Launcelot many good knights, and many noble knights drew unto Sir Launcelot. When this was known openly, that King Arthur and Sir Launcelot were at debate,<sup>36</sup> many knights were glad of their debate, and many were full heavy of their debate.

[The conflict begun in the preceding passage eventually leads King Arthur to undertake an expedition on the continent of Europe. While Arthur is away from England, Sir Mordred spreads a false report of the king's death and sets himself up as king. Arthur comes home, and a period of civil war, interspersed with some attempts at negotiation, ensues. The following passage describes the battle in which Mordred is slain and Arthur apparently fatally wounded.]

### Book XXI

#### CHAPTER 4

*How the battle began, where Mordred was slain, and Arthur hurt to the death*

. . . And never was there seen a more dolcfuller battle in no Christian land; for there was but rushing and riding, foining<sup>37</sup> and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken eithir to other, and many a deadly stroke. But ever King Arthur rode throughout the battle of Sir Mordred many times, and did full nobly as a noble king should, and at all times he fainted never; and Sir Mordred that day put him in devoir,<sup>38</sup> and in great peril. And thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted till the noble knights were laid to the cold earth; and ever they fought still till it was near night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the down. Then was Arthur wood wroth<sup>39</sup> out of measure, when he saw his people so slain from him. Then the king looked about him, and then was he ware, of all his host and of all his good knights, were left no more on live<sup>40</sup> but two knights; that one was Sir Lucan the Butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, and they were full sore wounded. Jesu mercy, said the king, where are all my noble knights become? Alas that ever I should see this doleful day, for now, said Arthur, I am come to mine end. But would to God that I wist where were that traitor Sir Mordred, that hath caused all this mischief. Then was King Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his

36. at war.

37. thrusting.

38. difficulty.

39. furiously angry.

40. alive.

sword among a great heap of dead men. Now give me my spear, said Arthur, unto Sir Lucan, for yonder I have espied the traitor that all this woe hath wrought. Sir, let him be, said Sir Lucan, for he is unhappy; and if ye pass this unhappy day ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Good lord, remember ye of your night's dream, and what the spirit of Sir Gawaine told you this night, yet God of his great goodness hath preserved you hitherto. Therefore, for God's sake, my lord, leave off by this, for blessed be God ye have won the field, for here we be three on live, and with Sir Mordred is none on live; and if ye leave off now this wicked day of destiny is past. Tide me death, betide me life,<sup>41</sup> saith the king, now I see him yonder alone he shall never escape mine hands, for at a better avail shall I never have him. God speed you well, said Sir Bedivere. Then the king gat his spear in both his hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying: Traitor, now is thy death day come. And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran until<sup>42</sup> him with his sword drawn in his hand. And there King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin<sup>43</sup> of his spear, throughout the body, more than a fathom. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death wound he thrust himself with the might that he had up to the bur<sup>44</sup> of King Arthur's spear. And right so he smote his father Arthur, with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth; and the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned oftentimes. And Sir Lucan the Butler and Sir Bedivere oftentimes heave him up. And so weakly they led him betwixt them both, to a little chapel not far from the seaside. And when the king was there he thought him well cased. Then heard they people cry in the field. Now go thou, Sir Lucan, said the king, and do me to wit<sup>45</sup> what betokens that noise in the field. So Sir Lucan departed, for he was grievously wounded in many places. And so as he yede,<sup>46</sup> he saw and hearkened by the moonlight, how that pillers<sup>47</sup> and robbers were come into the field, to pill<sup>48</sup> and to rob many a full noble knight of brooches, and beads, of many a good ring, and of many a rich jewel; and who that were not dead all out, there they slew them for their harness<sup>49</sup> and their riches. When Sir Lucan understood this work, he came to the king as soon as he might, and told him all what he had heard and seen. Therefore by my rede,<sup>50</sup> said Sir Lucan, it is best that we bring you to some town. I would it were so, said the king.

41. whether death or life happen to me.

42. to.

43. thrust.

44. handle.

45. do me to wit: tell.

46. (yode) went.

47. pillagers.

48. pillage.

49. armor.

50. counsel, advice.

CHAPTER 5

*How King Arthur commanded to cast his sword Excalibur into the water, and how he was delivered to ladies in a barge*

But I may not stand, mine head works so. Ah Sir Launcelot, said King Arthur, this day have I sore missed thee: alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawaine me warned in my dream. Then Sir Lucan took up the king the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting the king swooned; and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, that the part of his guts fell out of his body, and therewith the noble knight's heart brast.<sup>51</sup> And when the king awoke, he beheld Sir Lucan, how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his guts lay at his feet. Alas, said the king, this is to me a full heavy sight, to see this noble duke so dic for my sake, for he would have holpen<sup>52</sup> me, that had more need of help than I. Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me: now Jesu have mercy upon his soull! Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. Leave this mourning and weeping, said the king, for all this will not avail me, for wit thou well an I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time hieth fast, said the king. Therefore, said Arthur unto Sir Bedivere, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again. So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft was all of precious stones; and then he said to himself: If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And so, as soon as he might, he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword in the water. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds. That is untruly said of thee, said the king, therefore go thou lightly again, and do my commandment; as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in. Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then he thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and so ofte<sup>53</sup> he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wappe<sup>54</sup> and waves wanne.<sup>55</sup> Ah, traitor untrue, said King Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me

51. burst.

52. helped.

53. once more.

54. lap.

55. ebb.

twice. Who would have weened that, thou that hast been to me so lief and dear? and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the richness of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if<sup>56</sup> thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands; for thou wouldst for my rich sword see me dead. Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side; and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water, as he might; and there came an arm and an hand above the water, and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hove a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. Now put me into the barge, said the king. And so he did softly; and there received him three queens with great mourning; and so they set them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head. And then that queen said: Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? alas, this wound on your head hath caught over-much cold. And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried: Ah my lord Arthur, what shall become of me, now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies? Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in; for I will ride into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound: and if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest . . .

56. and unless.

# Masterpieces of the Renaissance

EDITED BY

P. M. PASINETTI

*Associate Professor of Italian and Humanities,  
University of California, Los Angeles*

## THE RENAISSANCE AND ANTIQUITY

The term *Renaissance* describes a period of proverbially great intellectual and artistic achievements. The literal meaning of the word—"rebirth"—suggests that one impulse toward these achievements came from the example of ancient culture, or even better, from a certain vision which the artists and intellectuals of the Renaissance possessed of the world of antiquity which was "reborn" through their work. Especially in the more mature phase of the Renaissance, men were aware of having brought about in many fields a vigorous renewal, which they openly associated with the cult of antiquity. The restoration of ancient canons was regarded as a glorious achievement to be set beside the thrilling discoveries of their own age. "To-

day," Rabelais writes through his Gargantua,

the old sciences are revived, knowledge is systematized, discipline reestablished. The learned languages are restored: Greek, without which a man would be ashamed to consider himself educated; Hebrew, Chaldean and Latin. Printing is now in use, an art so accurate and elegant that it betrays the divine inspiration of its discovery, which I have lived to witness. Alas! Conversely, I was not spared the horror of such diabolic works as gunpowder and artillery.

Machiavelli, whose infatuation with antiquity is as typical a trait as his better-advertised political realism, in the opening of his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy* (*Discorsi sopra la prima decada di Tito Livio*, 1513-1521) suggests that rulers should be as keen on the imitation of ancient "virtues" as are artists, lawyers, and the scientists: "The

civil laws are nothing but decisions given by the ancient jurists-consults. . . . And what is the science of medicine, but the experience of ancient physicians, which their successors have taken for their guide?"

The vogue of the term *Renaissance* is relatively recent, and its wide popularization stems in part from the success of Jakob Burckhardt's famous book, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). As with other terms which have currency in the history of culture (for instance, *romanticism*), its usefulness depends on its keeping a certain degree of elasticity. Thus the Renaissance as a "movement" can be regarded as extending through varying periods of years, and also as including phases and traits of what is otherwise known as the Middle Ages (and vice versa). The peak of the Renaissance can be shown to have occurred at different times in different countries, the movement having had its inception in Italy, where its impact was at first most visible in the fine arts, while in England, for instance, it developed later and its main achievements were in literature, particularly the drama. The meaning of the term has also, in the course of time, widened considerably: nowadays it conveys, to say the least, a general notion of artistic creativity, of extraordinary zest for life and knowledge, of sensory delight in opulence and magnificence, of spectacular individual achievement, thus extending beyond the literal meaning of rebirth and the strict idea of a revival

and imitation of antiquity.

Even in the stricter sense the term continues to have its function. The degree to which European intellectuals of the period were steeped in the vision of antiquity is difficult for the average modern reader to realize fully. Even at first sight the student will discover that for these writers references to classical mythology, philosophy, and literature are not ornaments or affectations; along with references to the Scriptures they are part, and a major part, of their mental equipment and way of thinking. When Erasmus through his "Folly" speaks in a cluster of classical allusions, or Machiavelli writes to a friend: "I get up before daylight, prepare my birdlime, and go out with a bundle of cages on my back, so that I look like Geta when he came back from the harbor with the books of Amphitryo," the words have by no means the sound of crude self-gratification which might attend them nowadays; they are wholly natural, familiar, unassuming.

When we are overcome by sudden emotion, our first exclamations are likely to be in the language most familiar to us—our dialect, if we happen to have one. Montaigne thus relates of himself that when once his father unexpectedly fell back in his arms in a swoon, the first words he uttered under the emotion of that experience were in Latin. Similarly Cellini in expressing his admiration of a Greek statue establishes with the ancient artist an immediate contact, a proud familiarity:

I cried to the Duke: "My lord, this is a statue in Greek marble, and it is a miracle of beauty. . . . If your Excellency permits, I should like to restore it—head and arms and feet. . . . It is certainly not my business to patch up statues, that being the trade of botchers, who do it in all conscience villainously ill; yet the art displayed by this great master of antiquity cries out to me to help him."

The men who, starting at about the middle of the fourteenth century, gave new impulse to this taste for the classics are often referred to as Humanists. The word in that sense is related to what we call the humanities, and the humanities at that time were Latin and Greek. Every cultivated person wrote and spoke Latin, with the result that a Western community of intellectuals could exist, a spiritual "republic of letters" above individual nations. The archetype of the modern "man of letters" is often said to be Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca), a fourteenth-century Italian poet and diplomat who anticipated certain ideals cherished later by the men of the Renaissance: a strong sense of the glories of antiquity, a high conception of the literary art, a taste for the good life, a basic pacifism.

On the other hand, in any mention of the Renaissance as a revival of antiquity, we should never forget the imaginative quality, the visionary impulse, with which the men of letters of the period looked at those memories—the same vision and imagination with which they regarded such contemporary heroes as the great navigators

and astronomers. The Renaissance view of the cultural monuments of antiquity was far from being merely that of the philologist and the antiquarian; indeed, familiarity may have been facilitated by the very lack of a scientific sense of history. We find the visionary and imaginative element not only in the creations of poets and dramatists (Shakespeare's Romans, to give an obvious example) but also in the works of political writers: as when Machiavelli describes himself entering, through his reading, the

ancient courts of ancient men, where, being lovingly received, I feed on that food which alone is mine, and which I was born for; I am not ashamed to speak with them and to ask the reasons for their actions, and they courteously answer me. For . . . hours I feel no boredom and forget every worry; I do not fear poverty, and death does not terrify me. I give myself completely over to the ancients.

Imitation of antiquity (a standard modern description of certain Renaissance ideals) acquires, in Machiavelli and many others, a special aspect; between schoolroom imitation and that of the Renaissance there is as much difference as between the impulse to *learn* and the impulse to *be*.

#### THE RENAISSANCE AND THE MIDDLE AGES. "THE DIGNITY OF MAN"

Inaccurate as the hackneyed notion may be that the "light" of the Renaissance broke through a long "night" of the Middle Ages, it is necessary to

remember that this view was not devised by subsequent "enlightened" centuries but held by the men of the Renaissance themselves. In his genealogy of giants from Grangousier to Gargantua to Pantagruel Rabelais conveniently represents the generations of modern learning with their varying degrees of enlightenment; this is what Gargantua writes to his son:

My late father Grangousier, of blessed memory, made every effort that I might achieve mental, moral, and technical excellence. . . . But you can realize that conditions were not as favorable to learning as they are to-day. Nor had I such gifted teachers as you. We were still in the dark ages; we still walked in the shadow of the dark clouds of ignorance; we suffered the calamitous consequences of the destruction of good literature by the Goths. Now, by God's grace, light and dignity have been restored to letters, and I have lived to see it.

Definitions of the Renaissance must also in one way or another include the idea that the period was characterized by preoccupation with this life rather than with the life beyond. The contrast of an ideal Medieval Man, whose mode of action is basically oriented toward the thought of the afterlife, and who therefore conceives of his days on earth as transient and preparatory, with an ideal Renaissance Man, possessing and cherishing earthly interests so concrete and self-sufficient that the very realization of the ephemeral quality of life is to him nothing but an added spur to its immediate enjoyment—this is a useful contrast even though it represents an enormous oversimplification of the facts.

This same emphasis on the immediate is reflected in the earthly, amoral, and esthetic character of the Renaissance code of conduct. According to this code, human action is judged not in terms of right and wrong, of good and evil (as it is judged when life is viewed as a moral "test," with reward or punishment in the afterlife), but in terms of its present concrete validity and effectiveness, of the delight it affords, of its memorability, its *beauty*. In that sense a good deal that is typical of the Renaissance, from architecture to poetry, from sculpture to rhetoric, may be related to a taste for the harmonious and the memorable, for the spectacular effect, for the successful striking of a pose. Individual human action, seeking as it were in itself its own reward, finds justification in its *formal* appropriateness; in its being a well-rounded achievement, perfect of its kind; in the zest and gusto with which it is, here and now, performed; and, finally, in its proving worthy of remaining as a testimony to the performer's power on earth.

A convenient way of grasping this emphasis is to consider certain words which are often especially expressive of the interests of the period—"virtue," "fame," "glory." "Virtue," particularly in its Italian form, *virtù*, is to be understood in a wide sense. As we may see even now in some relics of its older meanings, the word (from the Latin *vir*, "man") connotes active power—the intrinsic force and ability of a person or thing (the "virtue" of a law, or of a medica-



ment)—and hence, also, technical skill (the capacity of the “virtuoso”). The Machiavellian prince’s “virtues,” therefore, are not necessarily goodness, temperance, clemency, and the like; they are whatever forces and skills may help him in the efficient management and preservation of his princely powers. The idealistic, intangible part of his success is consigned to such concepts as “fame” and “glory,” and here the dimension within which human action is considered is still an earthly one: they connote the hero’s success and reputation with his contemporaries, or look forward to splendid recognition from posterity, on earth.

In this sense (though completely pure examples of such an attitude are rare) the purpose of life is the unrestrained and self-sufficient practice of one’s “virtue,” the competent and delighted exercise of one’s skill. At the same time, there is no reason to forget that such virtues and skills are God’s gift to man. The world-view of even some of the most clearly earth-bound Renaissance men was hardly godless; Machiavelli, Cellini, Rabelais, take for granted the presence of God in their own and their heroes’ lives:

. . . we have before our eyes extraordinary and unexampled means prepared by God. The sea has been divided. A cloud has guided you on your way. The rock has given forth water. Manna has fallen. Everything has united to make you great. The rest is for you to do. God does not intend to do everything, lest he deprive us of our free will and the share of glory that belongs to us. [Machiavelli.]

According to the Pythagorean system, Gargantua would, with his tutor, recapitulate briefly all that he had read, seen, learned, done and assimilated in the course of the day. Then they prayed to God the Creator, doing Him worship and confirming their faith in Him, glorifying Him for His immense goodness, vouchsafing thanks for all the mighty past and imploring His divine clemency for all the future. And so they retired to rest. [Rabelais.]

I found that all the bronze my furnace contained had been exhausted in the head of this figure [of the statue of Perseus]. It was a miracle to observe that not one fragment remained in the orifice of the channel, and that nothing was wanting to the statue. In my great astonishment I seemed to see in this the hand of God arranging and controlling all. [Cellini.]

Yet there is no doubt that if we compare the attitudes of these authors with the view of the world and of the value of human action which emerges from the major literary work of the Middle Ages, the *Divine Comedy*, and with the manner in which human action is there seen within a grand extratemporal design, the presence of God in the Renaissance writers cited above cannot help appearing marginal and perfunctory. Castiglione in the first pages of the *Courtier* pays homage to the memory of the former duke of Montefeltro, in whose palace at Urbino the book’s personages hold their lofty debate on the idea of a perfect gentleman (an earlier member of the same family appears in Dante’s Hell, another in Dante’s Purgatory); but he praises him only for his achievements as a man of arms

and a promoter of the arts. There is no thought of either the salvation or the damnation of his soul (though the general tone of the work would seem to imply his salvation), and he is exalted instead for victories in battle and, even more warmly, for having built a splendid palace—the tangible symbol of his earthly glory, for it is both the mark of political and social power, and a work of art.

Thus the popular view which associates the idea of the Renaissance especially with the flourishing of the arts is correct. The leaders of the period saw in a work of art the clearest instance of beautiful, harmonious, and self-justified performance. To create such a work became the valuable occupation *par excellence*, the most satisfactory display of *virtù*. The Renaissance view of antiquity exemplifies this attitude: the artists and intellectuals of the period not only drew on antiquity for certain practices and forms but found there as well a recognition of the place of the arts among outstanding modes of human action. In this way, the concepts of "fame" and "glory" became particularly associated with the art of poetry because the Renaissance drew from antiquity the idea of the poet as celebrator of high deeds, the "dispenser of glory."

There is, then, an important phase of Renaissance psychology in which terrestrial life is seen as positive fulfillment. This is clear in all fields of endeavor, and especially where there is a close association between the practical and the intellectual, as in the

exercise of political power, the act of scientific discovery, the creation of works of art. The Renaissance assumption is that there are things highly worth doing, within a simply temporal pattern. By doing them, man proves his privileged position in Creation and therefore incidentally follows God's intent. The often cited phrase "the dignity of man" describes this positive, strongly affirmed awareness of the intellectual and physical "virtues" of the human being, and of his place in Creation.

It is important, however, to see this fact about the Renaissance in the light of another: where there is a singularly high capacity for feeling the delight of earthly achievement, there is a possibility that its ultimate worth will also be questioned profoundly. What (the Renaissance mind usually asks at some point) is the purpose of all this activity? What meaningful relation does it bear to any all-inclusive, cosmic pattern? The Renaissance coincided with, and perhaps to some extent occasioned, a loss of firm belief in the final unity and the final intelligibility of the universe, such belief as underlies, for example, the *Divine Comedy*, enabling Dante to say in the *Paradise*:

I beheld leaves within the  
unfathomed blaze  
Into one volume bound by  
love, the same  
That the universe holds scat-  
tered through its maze.  
Substance and accidents, and  
their modes, became  
As if together fused, all in  
such wise

That what I speak of is one simple flame.

Once the notion of this grand unity of design has lost its authority, certainty about the final value of human actions is no longer to be found. For some minds, indeed, the sense of void becomes so strong as to paralyze all aspiration to power or thirst for knowledge or delight in beauty; the attitude resulting when this happens, we call Renaissance melancholy, whether it be openly shown (as by some characters in Elizabethan drama) or provide an undercurrent of sadness, or incite to ironical forms of compromise, to some sort of wise adjustment (as in Erasmus or Montaigne). The legend of Faust—"Doctor" Faustus—a great amasser of knowledge doomed to frustration by his perception of the vanity of science, for which he finds at one point desperate substitutes in pseudo science and the devil's arts, is one illustration of this sense of void. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is another, a play in which the very word "thought" seems to acquire a troubled connotation—"the pale cast of thought"; "thought and affliction, passion, hell itself." In these instances, the intellectual excitement of understanding, the zest and pride of achievement through what chiefly constitutes man's "dignity," his intellect, seem not so much lost as directly inverted.

Thus while on one, and perhaps the better-known, side of the picture man's intellect in Renaissance literature enthusiastically expatiates over the realms

of knowledge and unveils the mysteries of the universe, on the other it is beset by puzzling doubts and a profound mistrust of its own powers. Man's moral nature is seen as only little lower than the angels, but also scarcely above the beasts. Earthly power—a favorite theme because Renaissance literature was so largely produced in the courts, or with a vivid sense of courtly ideals—is the crown of human aspirations ("How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown, / Within whose circuit is Elysium") but it is also the death's head ("Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay, / Might stop a hole to keep the wind away").

From the tensions generated by this simultaneous exaltation and pessimism about the human situation, much of Renaissance literature takes its character and strength.

### ERASMUS, THE PRAISE OF FOLLY

Keeping in mind some of the contrasts indicated above, we realize at once that in Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* (*Moriae encomium*, 1509) easy and one-sided conclusions about the power of the human intellect, the worth and extent of knowledge, and above all the wisdom of man's behavior and the purpose of life are discarded.

To present the issues concretely, Erasmus uses a dramatic setting; he takes for his speaker a feminine figure, Folly, placing her in front of an audience of which she herself makes us aware: ". . . as soon as I began to speak to this great audience,

all faces suddenly brightened . . ." One can almost visualize Folly gesturing, pointing to the public, attracting attention: "I am almost out of breath . . ." "But why not speak to you more openly . . . ?" "You applaud! I was sure that you were not so wise, or rather so foolish—no, so wise . . ."

The general tone of her speech is an elegant balance between the jocose and the serious, the crudite and the foolish. This attitude also throws light upon the audience—a congenial one, we feel, made up of people to whom the cultured allusions with which Folly's speech is studded are so familiar that they will appreciate the comic twists performed upon them; as they will, more generally, appreciate the mild satire on conventional oratory which the monologue contains. "I see that you are expecting a peroration, but," she admits in the end, "you are certainly foolish if you think that I can remember any part of such a hodgepodge of words as I have poured out." Folly's attitude toward her audience is not polemic but convivial. The butts of her polemic (the passionless Stoics) constitute a third party, and rather than address such people, Folly enlists her audience's support in rejecting them: "I ask you, if it were put to a vote, what city would choose such a person as mayor?"

This is the "play" as it is presented to us. But of course it is actually a "play within a play"; it is performed within the larger framework consisting of Erasmus and *his* audience, Erasmus

and ourselves. From his advantageous position backstage, he uses Folly as an ambiguous mouthpiece; in fact, by presenting his mouthpiece as foolish, light-headed, and rambling, he throws into sharper focus the truths which she expresses; he has secured the advantages of her directness and "innocence" while he grants her the full support of his own erudition and wit. Thus in spite of apparent frivolity, we cannot help continuously suspecting in the book a depth and complexity of meaning between the lines, as it were, for the expression of which Folly is used as a convenient instrument. We shall perhaps best gauge that complexity and come nearest to the ideal center of Erasmus' meaning by asking ourselves, What does Folly stand for? Does she stand for carefree living? for a way of life not hostile to the passions? for foolishness? for self-abandonment? for naïveté? for imagination? Is she simply the lighthearted creation of a great scholar in a frivolous moment, deploring the vanity of intellectual knowledge, and the scholar's austere and solitary life, in favor of instinct, intuition, good fellowship, "innocence"? Or does she embody a paradoxical "wisdom" to be found at the end of a long and perhaps finally frustrating accumulation of learning? Our answer to such questions must be at least as equivocal as the attitude of the work itself.

Clearly the issue of knowledge versus ignorance underlies this writing; Folly's talk may often look like a debunking of the former in favor of the latter, but

—and this is the function of the “play”—the attitude ultimately suggested is one of neither “barbaric” rebellion nor unrelieved satiety and desperation. Erasmus’ position, whether overtly or between the lines, is rather that of noble and wise compromise: a serene acceptance of the limitations of knowledge rather than a “melancholic” rejection of its value followed by a desperate gesture of rebellion. In other words, Erasmus’ attitude toward Folly is not at all the polemical reaction of a dissatisfied intellectual who finds that the mind has not given him satisfactory answers and who therefore embraces folly in the same way as Faust embraces the devil’s arts. And on the other hand, the author’s “praise” of Folly is certainly not feigned or *mainly* ironical. His point of view is not that of the sophisticate who takes a frivolous delight in masquerading, let us say, as a shepherd. When a man like Erasmus implies that possibly fools are really wiser than we are (a possibility which underlies many a passage in the book), his attitude toward the “fool” includes understanding, affection, and a real question about value. The balance of irony is kept just in both directions; the wisdom of compromise and the sage’s sense of limits are guiding, from backstage, the performance.

What has been said about the value of knowledge can be extended to the value of life: the world is a stage, and the forces ruling its actors may be irrational or ununderstandable, but it is in accordance with nature that we should go on playing our

rôles. Folly is imagination, inventiveness, and therefore pretense and make-believe—“everything is pretense.” But at the same time, “this play is performed in no other way”; “true prudence . . . consists in not desiring more wisdom than is proper to mortals.” This is “to act the play of life.”

The acceptance of life as a play, as a pageant, opens a vision of true human reality, Erasmus feels, whereas the wisdom of the Stoics (who stand for pure intellectualism) produces “a marble imitation of a man” from which one shudders away “as from a ghost.” Thus Folly regulates life by “a timely mixture of ignorance, thoughtlessness, forgetfulness of evil, hope of good, and a dash of delight.”

#### CASTIGLIONE, THE BOOK OF THE COURTIER

In reading selections from Baldesar Castiglione’s treatise on the ideal courtly gentleman, *The Book of the Courtier* (*Il libro del cortegiano*, published in 1528), it is helpful to consider the background description with which the book opens as a “setting,” because this approach serves to suggest the vaguely theatrical and “artificial” atmosphere which pervades the composition. It is important to observe, however, that the characters whose highly mannered conversation the book purports to record were all actual members (presented with their own names) of a courtly milieu of which the author himself was a part. These people, then, were known to him not as objects of adulation or satire (the two ex-

tremes with which we are perhaps more accustomed to associate literary pictures of aristocracies) but rather as equals and companions whose standards were also his own. Hence Castiglione's attitude is one neither of conventional adulation nor of mockery; the theatrical way in which the scene is set and his characters talk (the traditional form of the Platonic dialogue acquires here the tone of what in the Renaissance was called "civil conversation") does not suggest either official courtly pomp, or, conversely, a comedy of manners; it is simply the expression of a style, "artificial" in no derogatory sense, which both the characters and the author considered ideally appropriate to people of their kind and station. The speakers appear somewhat like ladies and gentlemen who have kindly consented, on some courtly occasion, to take rôles in a play, except that it happens that the play is their own: they enact, so to speak, themselves. The strong element of stylization (the elaborate phrasings, the manner of the repartee, and the like) is not forced by the writer on his material; we feel rather that in his formalizing process he has followed, and emphasized, qualities that were inherent in the world he pictures. He presents a theatrical and stylized view of a world which was theatrical and stylized to begin with. In this sense the book is the best expression of Renaissance court society at its most refined and self-conscious; of that society which had a taste, as was observed in the general remarks earlier in this introduc-

tion, for the well-finished gesture, the act formally perfect of its kind—a taste which applied to all modes and norms of activity, conversation or dueling, art, courtship, etiquette.

Our selections are from the first of the four books (or evening conversations) into which the *Courtier* is divided. The purpose of this first book is to arrive, through the contributions of the obviously experienced speakers, at a description of the perfect courtly gentleman. Though Machiavelli too, in his description of the prince, presents something of an idealization of a type, his explicit intention is to come down to reality and practical motives, in contrast with the abstractions of preceding authors. Castiglione's attitude is different from the start. He has what we may call a Platonic turn of mind, in the sense that he intentionally and openly seeks the ideal and permanent form behind the transient and fragmentary examples. This point of view in the *Courtier* suggests, among other things, the sense of rule, of adjustment to correct norms, within which Castiglione's mentality characteristically moves. The aim of the book is positive acceptance of certain standards: the assumption is that codes of behavior exist and can be defined, and man can educate himself to comply with them. Relations between individuals, and particularly between members of the ruling portion of society, can be correctly and pleasantly regulated; there is even, as the famous passage on "nonchalance" (*sprezzatura*) at the end of our

second selection suggests, a sort of formalization of informality.

Considered against the background of the period with which we are here concerned, the book presents the face opposite to those views of the Renaissance court, especially popularized by drama, in which that institution is the typical scene of intrigue, corruption, violence. In such instances the discrepancy between the reality presented and the idea of "courtesy" is total; the balance is lost, and the eventual consequence is a sense of void, of the purposelessness of actions unsustained by norms, of Hamlet-like melancholy. In Castiglione the balance is still fully kept; in fact, the *Courtier* registers the clearest moment of perfect and gentle equilibrium.

#### MACHIAVELLI, THE PRINCE

*The Prince* (*Il principe*, 1513) consists of twenty-six chapters of various lengths. The first eleven chapters deal with the different types of states and dominions and the ways in which they are acquired and preserved—the early title of the whole book, in Latin, was *De principatibus* (*Of Princedoms*)—and the twelfth to fourteenth chapters focus particularly on the problems of military power. But the book's astounding fame is based mainly on the final part (from the fifteenth chapter to the end), which deals primarily with the personal attributes and "virtues" of the prince himself. In other words, a work which is generally associated with cold and precise realism, presents what is after all a hypothetical

portrait of an ideal man. Books of this sort may be classified, in one sense, as pedagogical literature. While for their merits of form and of vivid, if stylized, characterization they can be considered works of art, their overt purpose is to codify a certain set of manners and rules of conduct; the author presents himself therefore as especially wise, an expert in the field. His position is quite different from that of another prominent type of Renaissance writer, the court poet, with his more or less perfunctory panegyric on the patron. The relation between the patron and the pedagogical writer is, at least in appearance, more purposeful: the latter's wisdom concerns something more immediately practical than, say, the poet's vague celebration of his lord's or his lord's ancestors' virtues; he poses, ideally at least, as the "mind" behind the lord's "arm."

Machiavelli is a clear instance: his pedagogical fervor, the dramatic and oratorical way in which he confronts his listener, the wealth and promptness of his pertinent illustrations are characteristic: "Either you are already prince, or you are on the way to become one. In the first case liberality is dangerous; in the second it is very necessary to be thought liberal. Caesar was one of those . . . Somebody may answer . . . I answer . . ." Having a direct knowledge of politics, he is quick to use examples with which he is personally acquainted: "Men are so simple and so subject to present needs

that he who deceives in this way will always find those who will let themselves be deceived. I do not wish to keep still about one of the recent instances. Alexander VI did nothing else than deceive men, and had no other intention . . ." The implied tone of *I know, I have seen such things myself* adds a special immediacy to the writing. Machiavelli's view of the practical world may have been an especially startling one; but the sensation caused by his work would have been far less without the rhetorical force, the drama of augmentation, which makes the *Prince* a unique piece of persuasive art.

The view of man in Machiavelli is not at all cheerful; indeed, the pessimistic notion that man is evil is not so much his conclusion about human nature as his premise; it is the starting point of all subsequent reasoning upon the course for a ruler to follow. The very fact of its being given as a premise, however, tends to qualify it: it is not a firm philosophical judgment but a stratagem, dictated by the facts as they are seen by a lucid observer here and now. The author is committed to his view of mankind not as philosopher or as religious man, but as practical politician; he indicates the rules of the game as his experience shows that the game must, under the circumstances, be played. "A prudent ruler . . . cannot and should not observe faith when such observance is to his disadvantage and the causes that made him give his promise have vanished. If men were all good, this advice would not be good, but since men are wicked

and do not keep their promises to you, you likewise do not have to keep yours to them."

A basic question in the study of Machiavelli, therefore, is, How much of a realist is he? His picture of the perfectly efficient ruler has something of the character of an abstraction and idealization; it shows, though much less clearly than Castiglione's picture of the courtier, the well-known Renaissance tendency toward idealized, "perfect" form. Machiavelli's abandonment of specific and immediate realities in favor of the ideal is shown most clearly at the conclusion of the book, particularly in the last chapter. He offers there what amounts to the greatest of his illustrations as the prince's preceptor and counselor: the ideal ruler, technically equipped now by his pedagogue, is to undertake a mission—the liberation of Machiavelli's Italy. If we regard the last chapter as a culmination of his discussion rather than a dissonant addition to it, we are likely to feel at that point not only that Machiavelli's realistic method is finally directed toward an ideal task but that his conception of that task, far from being based on immediate realities, is founded on cultural and poetic myths. Machiavelli's method here becomes imaginative rather than scientific. His exhortation to liberate Italy, and his final prophecy, belong to the tradition of poetic visions in which a present state of decay is lamented, and a hope of future redemption is expressed (as in Dante, *Purgatory*, Canto VI). And a very significant part of this hope is presented not in



terms of technical political considerations (choice of the opportune moment, evaluation of military power) but in terms of a sort of poetic justice for which precedents are sought in religious and ancient history and in mythology: ". . . if it was necessary to make clear the ability of Moses that the people of Israel should be enslaved in Egypt, and to reveal Cyrus's greatness of mind that the Persians should be oppressed by the Medes, and to demonstrate the excellence of Theseus that the Athenians should be scattered, so at the present time . . ." "Everything is now fully disposed for the work . . . if only your House adopts the methods of those I have set forth as examples. Moreover, we have before our eyes extraordinary and unexampled means prepared by God. The sea has been divided. . . . Manna has fallen."

His Italy, as he observed in the previous chapter, is now a country "without dykes and without any wall of defence." It has suffered from "deluges," and its present rule, a "barbarian" one, "stinks in every nostril." Something is rotten in it, in short, as in Hamlet's Denmark. And we become more and more detached even from the particular example, Italy, as we recognize in the situation a pattern frequently exemplified in tragedy: the desire for communal regeneration, for the cleansing of the *polis*. Of this cleansing, Italy on one side and the imaginary prince and redeemer on the other may be taken as symbols. The envisaged redemption is identified with antiquity and

Roman virtue, while the realism of the political observer is here drowned out by the cry of the humanist dreaming of ancient glories.

### RABELAIS, GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL

The life of François Rabelais, a man of wide humanistic education in the Renaissance tradition, typifies the variety of interests of the period, for he was at various points a law student, a monk, and a practicing physician; and he knew the life of people in cities and on country estates, in monasteries and at court. He was not by any means exclusively a professional writer; and his story of giants, written piecemeal through the years of his maturity, in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, is not so much a unified work of fiction as a summation of his wide knowledge, his diverse notions of the world, and his fantasies.

Its peculiar quality may be described in terms of contrasts: the supernatural and the realistic in the characters and in the action; the solemn and the comic, the lofty and the bawdy, in the themes; the erudite and the colloquial in the style. His heroes, as giants, move in a dimension which is entirely out of proportion with ordinary reality; they belong—with their extraordinary size, power, and longevity—to a tradition known to us from myth, from folk tale, and from biblical narrative. Yet these same characters express the feelings and attitudes of ordinary men; in fact they seem to be presented as epitomes of

what man, according to Rabelais, ought to be in a reasonable and enjoyable world. Rabelais' view of the world, we soon realize, is also well reflected in his literary style. High and low, pedantic and farcical, ponderous and mocking, it is the sign of a broad intellectual and moral inclusiveness, an enthusiastic open-mindedness and gusto. As we come across the learned allusion, the solemn Ciceronian phrasing, and the scholastic pedantry, all mingled with the familiar and the folksy, we notice that the presence of the colloquial quality by no means destroys the impact of the erudition or necessarily gives it the tone of parody. For the author attends to both with equal delight and mixes them completely; the blending results in an inseparable whole, sustained everywhere by the same rich manipulation of words and the same exuberant vitality. Thus Rabelais' style concretely embodies his view of the world and of man. His message, as even the new reader soon feels, his view of the human condition, is basically a cheerful one; his work is usually considered a major monument of the Renaissance at its most satisfied and affirmative. The basic theme of drinking, the vast thirst of his giant protagonists, is conveniently taken to symbolize the healthy and all-embracing sensual and intellectual appetites of the period.

As we shall see below, Benvenuto Cellini, in another of our selections, can also be regarded as an instance of the affirmative Renaissance spirit little hampered by doubt and melancholy;

in fact, Cellini is even too pure and thoughtless, too "innocent" an example. In his fully adjusted way of living, that somewhat bombastic extrovert does not ask himself about value and meaning. Rabelais, at least implicitly, does take an interest in questions of value; and he seems assured, on what may appear to some of us relatively scant evidence, of the basic goodness and perfectibility of man. The selections given here emphasize that aspect, showing, among other things, Rabelais' faith in a certain type of physical and mental education. They reveal, therefore, his conception of the ideal man fit to live in what he considered a new age. It will be observed in this connection that although Rabelais was, among Europeans of the period, as responsible as anyone for the popular notion of an intellectual Renaissance following the aridity and bondage of medieval scholasticism and the barbarism of the "Gothic night," his ideal man also presents certain qualities which seem to us survivals of medieval codes; his ideal man remains a kind of knight-at-arms, even with the added emphasis on the intellectual ornaments of humanism. And this is true of other Renaissance writers—for example, Castiglione, Cervantes, Ariosto, Shakespeare; in their works the knightly ideal continues to appear, though variously twisted through irony, or in other ways distorted. Rabelais in his approach is very direct and hopeful: from his pages we gather the impression that a healthy, wise, gallant, and happy type of

man is a concrete possibility. Give the young the right tutoring—his implication is—do away with hampering scholasticism, let them take proper care of their bodily functions, and certain values of tolerance, *bon-homme*, and substantial well-being will finally and inevitably triumph. The sophistic, the arrogant, the hypocritical, will be exposed and defeated in the most reasonable and enjoyable of worlds.

Nowhere is this pleasant view expressed more clearly than in the conception of Thélème, the supremely good place on earth, the “abbey” according to Rabelais’ heart. All restrictions are banned here, not because total anarchy and license are advocated, but rather because for such supremely civilized “nuns” and “monks” as those of the Thélémite order instinctive inclinations will coincide with virtue: “The only rule of the house was: DO AS THOU WILT because men that are free, of gentle birth, well-bred and at home in civilized company possess a natural instinct that inclines them to virtue and saves them from vice. This instinct they name their honor.”

Rabelais’ broad optimism is qualified, of course, by the very premises of his story: for all its realism, and in spite of the fact that some episodes are mock-heroic versions of actual and even provincial and domestic events (the Picrochole war that precedes the establishment of the abbey of Thélème), this is still a fable, with giants as its main heroes and fantasy as its frequent method.

Much war, horror, intrigue, and injustice existed in the period as Rabelais knew it. In practical life, he muddled through by his tolerance, wisdom, and capacity for compromise (his temporary sympathy for the Reformation, in a time of raging religious conflict, stopped “this side of the stake”). But he survived also because he invented through his literature a world fashioned according to his own aspirations. In that world, for example, the heroes on the side of good and of justice not only win wars but also get a chance to display toward the vanquished an effective and nobly magniloquent clemency. The utopian quality of this world illustrates again the tendency of the Renaissance mind to seek the perfect model, the exemplary, ideal form. In some important passages of the book, and pre-eminently in our last selection—the famous letter of Gargantua to Pantagruel, dated from Sir Thomas More’s ideal land, Utopia—it is clear that this chronicle of giants, biblical in its magnitude and in its patriarchal qualities, with its Renaissance aspiration to “achieve mental, moral and technical excellence,” in its serious moments symbolizes the urge to perpetuate, from father to son, the true and noble form of man and thus idealistically confirm his divine origin, his “dignity.”

### CELLINI, AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Like many other writers of autobiographical literature, the Italian sculptor and goldsmith

Benvenuto Cellini offers an idealized, highly colorful picture of himself, almost a poetic mask. Consequently his *Autobiography* (*La vita di Benvenuto Cellini*, written between 1558 and 1562), though historically unreliable—as in the famous description of the sacking of Rome and particularly of his own rôle on that occasion—is interesting less as the portrait of a particular individual than as a representation of the “virtues” and codes of behavior which a man of Cellini’s time and quality considered desirable and worthy of spirited record. The more we read, the more he seems intent upon inventing a character, a favorite hero, to whom he gives his own name.

Cellini offers the purest case we know of the wholly positive, affirmative side of the Renaissance psychology, which is discussed in its various aspects earlier in this introduction. He is, indeed, unaware of being ruled by any “philosophy”; he is wholly immersed in the particular action at hand, in the part he plays, fully persuaded of its validity. He comes closest to placing himself in a large perspective, and to thinking in terms of the condition and destiny of man, when he shows a sort of superstitious reliance on his own good fortune and pluck: the teller of the tale is regarded as a hero singled out by Providence for high and lucky deeds. A sense of the exceptional and the miraculous is pressed upon the reader from the very start: there are prodigious omens when he is a little child; his father is himself a man of fabulous skills; his grandfather has passed his

hundredth year; and “Benvenuto,” of course, means “welcome.”

Cellini’s life was the life of a Renaissance artist, and therefore it involved, practically, two main sorts of relationship: the relationship to his work, and the relationship to his patrons—in his case a pope, a king of France, and a member of the Medici family. The accounts of his work provide some of the most serious and moving sections of the book; the description of the casting of the statue of Perseus is deservedly a classic. The contemporary milieu—the background of the courts that offered him patronage and, generally, of the society, high and low, in which he moved—provides among other things an element necessary in narratives where the central hero is prodigiously endowed and privileged: the “enemies,” those who seek to destroy him by turning the patron’s grace away from him, as in the Charlemagne stories the villain, the treacherous Ganelon of Mayence, acts against the privileged paladins. In the world of the intrigue-filled Renaissance courts, this situation occurred characteristically, and we possess few documents which give us so vividly as Cellini’s work a notion of that world and of the peculiar position of the artist in it. Cellini is lawless because he considers himself, as artist, above the law; whatever stands in the way of a full display of his particular *virtù*, whether natural impediments (casting metal) or human ones (the “enemies”) must be eliminated. With his aggressive spirit and his taste for the dra-

matic, he always has a special "enemy" singled out; the Pompeio of our selection is one. In disposing of Pompeio the hero illustrates what has sometimes been called the amorality of the Renaissance; he gives to killing the same sort of clean and athletic competence which he gives to art: "Then I aimed to strike him in the face; but fright made him turn his head round; and I stabbed him just beneath the ear. I only gave two blows, for he fell stone dead at the second." Nor would the picture be complete if, a little later, he did not have the Pope declare that "men like Benvenuto . . . stand above the law."

The very unreliability of certain sections of this account, as well as the histrionic tone which generally pervades it, call to mind one of the favorite images of Renaissance literature: the image of the world as a stage, of life as a pageant, in which men are more or less consciously playing their rôles. The exuberant gusto with which Cellini performs suggests that he is perfectly adjusted to the situation. The world is a stage on which he is "welcome" and where no higher "truth" concerns him. In other, more sensitive writers this same fictitious quality which the mystery of life and the fragmentariness of knowledge bestow on the human condition was to prompt, instead, a sense of ghastly vanity, and to conduce to melancholy or even folly.

### MONTAIGNE, ESSAYS

If one accepts the common view that in the Renaissance the individual human being was

exalted, and therefore a special emphasis was placed on the study of man in his "virtues" and singularities, it is natural to think of Montaigne—who in the last quarter of the sixteenth century fathered the modern genre of the personal essay—as representative, for he obviously felt that the characteristics of his individual mind and heart—all their minute aspects, variations, and even whims—were worthy of being carefully recorded. The student will soon notice that of the writers presented in this book Montaigne is the one who most openly speaks in his own right, clearly and unabashedly as himself. While Erasmus takes for the expression of certain views the ambiguous mouthpiece of his "Folly;" and, to choose a totally different example, Cellini, although writing an autobiography, seems obviously intent on building himself into a colorful protagonist, Montaigne's characteristic and somewhat rambling speech is in the simplest and most quintessential first person. Perhaps at no other time in literature—certainly not in the nineteenth-century age of romanticism, where in spite of the widespread notions about "free" expression of individual feelings writers so often showed themselves through an alter ego or a heroic mask—has a writer so thoroughly attempted to present himself without in the least assuming a pose, or falling into a type. "Had my intention been to court the world's favor," Montaigne writes in the foreword to his *Essays* (*Essais*), "I should have trimmed myself more bravely, and stood before

it in a studied attitude. I desire to be seen in my simple, natural, and everyday dress, without artifice or constraint; for it is myself I portray." And elsewhere he affirms: "Authors communicate themselves to the world by some special and extrinsic mark; I am the first to do so by my general being, as Michel de Montaigne, not as a grammarian or a poet or a lawyer. If the world finds fault with me for speaking too much of myself, I find fault with the world for not even thinking of itself."

But nothing would be more erroneous than to suppose that Montaigne's focusing on his individual self implies a sense of the extraordinary importance of man, of his central place in the world, or of the special power of his understanding. The contrary is true. In the first place, in temperament Montaigne is singularly opposed to assuming an attitude of importance: one of the keynotes of his writing, and one of his premises in undertaking it, is that the subject is average, "mediocre." In describing himself he is presenting an example of the ordinary human being, for the benefit of a few intimates; he declares that he has "but a private and family end in view"; and in that sense, in fact, his way of introducing himself to the reader shows a nobly elegant and perhaps vaguely ironical humbleness: "So, Reader, I am myself the subject of my book; it is not reasonable to expect you to waste your leisure on a matter so frivolous and empty." And then there is an even more fundamental reason why Montaigne's

presentation of himself is free from any heroic posturing or intellectual pride—a reason which involves his whole view of man's place in the world. In his deciding to write about himself and to probe, to "essay," his own nature, the implication is that this is the only subject on which a man can speak with any degree of certainty. Actually, then, this writer whose work is the most acute exposure of an individual personality in the literature of the Renaissance, is at the same time one of the highest illustrations of man's ironical consciousness of his intellectual limits.

It would be a mistake to forget, however, that his work remains an outstanding assertion of an individuality, even though it is an assertion of doubt, contradiction, change. Here as in other instances the student will do well to examine the quality and novelty of the work in the actual text in terms of realized writing, of "style." A solid classical manner, reflected in certain elements of the syntactical structure and in the continuous support of classical quotations, is combined in Montaigne's style with the variety, the apparent disconnectedness, and the dramatic assertiveness of a man who is continuously analyzing a fluid and, his modesty notwithstanding, singularly attractive subject.

Others form man; I describe him, and portray a particular, very ill-made one, who, if I had to fashion him anew, should indeed be very different from what he is. But now it is done. . . . The world is but a perennial see-saw. All things in it

are incessantly on the swing, the earth, the rocks of the Caucasus, the Egyptian pyramids . . . Even fixedness is nothing but a more sluggish motion. I cannot fix my object; it is befogged, and reels with a natural intoxication. . . . I do not portray the thing in itself. I portray the passage . . .

In spite of what may often seem a leisurely gait, the writer is continuously on the alert, listening to the promptings of his thought, his sensibility, his imagination, and registering them. The affirmation of the fluidity of the human personality, of the universality of the flux, is therefore both the premise of his writing and the sum of his study of man; it is both his method and his result.

Thus, although he writes in terms of one individual, and with a fairly obvious abhorrence of any sort of classification or description of types in the manner of conventional moralists, powerfully keen observation of man in general emerges from his writings—observation of man's nature, intellectual power, and capacity for coherent action; of his place on earth among other beings; of his place in Creation. Our selections offer instances of Montaigne's remarks on these matters.

If we keep in mind the large pattern of Renaissance literature, poised between positive and negative, enthusiasm and melancholy, we shall probably find that the general temper of Montaigne's writing, in spite of his assertions of doubt and his consciousness of vanity, by no means suggests an attitude of despair and gloom. His attitude

seems positive and negative in the same breath; it could be called a rich and fruitful sense of the relativity of everything. Thus if he examines and "essays" man's capacity to act purposefully and coherently (see the essay "Of the Inconsistency of Our Actions" among our selections), his implicit verdict is not that man's action is absolutely vain. Rather, observing the usual example—his own self—and seeing that there is nothing he can say of himself "absolutely, simply, and steadily," he refuses to attribute to the human personality a coherence which it does not possess and which, we may be tempted to surmise, would rather impoverish it. "Our actions are but a patchwork . . . We are all made up of bits . . . There is as much difference between us and ourselves, as between us and others." And he sustains his arguments, as usual, with a wealth of examples and anecdotes which are at once evidence of his vital curiosity about human nature and, in many cases, of his man-to-man familiarity with antiquity: Emperor Augustus, to mention one, pleases him because his character successfully escapes an all-of-a-piece description; he has "slipped through the fingers of even the most daring critics."

A sense of relativity and a balanced outlook, rather than a negative and desperate reversal of the optimistic view of the human situation, are apparent also from Montaigne's observation of man—and particularly of the civilized Renaissance man whom he exemplifies—in rela-

tion to his fellow human beings. In the famous essay "Of Cannibals," where a comparison is made between the codes of primitive tribes and those of "ourselves," the basic idea is not a disparagement of our civilization but a relativistic warning, for "we all call barbarism that which does not fit in with our usages." The cannibals' acts of barbarity are recognized, but the writer is "not so much concerned that we should remark on the horrible barbarity of such acts, as that, whilst rightly judging their errors, we should be so blind to our own." We do much worse, adds Montaigne, who wrote in times of horrible religious strife, and we do it under the guise of piety. The enlightening sense of relativity—rather than a more extreme and totally paradoxical view of the "nobility" of savages—permits him to see and admire what he considers superior elements in the customs of the cannibals—for instance, their conception of valor and their conduct of warfare. Here, in fact, Montaigne describes and admires a code of unrewarded gallantry, of valor for valor's sake, which was not uncommonly cherished by writers of the Renaissance (Castiglione, for example). "... the acquisition of the victor," writes Montaigne, "is the glory and advantage of having proved himself the superior in valour and virtue . . . The honour of virtue consists in combating, not in beating." We may incidentally add that acceptance of this notion of pure "virtue," practiced for no material purposes

and as self-rewarding as a beautiful object, appears to have been, for a writer like Montaigne, the way to preserve an admiration for the warrior's code of manly courage and valor in spite of the basically pacifist tendencies of his temperament and his bitter disinclination for the spectacles of conflict and bloodshed witnessed in his own time.

Naturally, an even larger sense of relativity emerges from Montaigne's writing when he examines man's place in the universal frame of things, as he does, in an outstanding instance, in some famous passages of the "Apology for Raimond Sebond" (a selection from which is included in this volume). Man's notion of his privileged position in Creation is eloquently questioned: "What has induced him to believe that that wonderful motion of the heavenly vault, the eternal light of those torches rolling so proudly over his head, the awe-inspiring agitations of that infinite sea, were established, and endure through so many centuries for his service and convenience?" The tone of the whole section is revealing. In many writers a similar anxiety about man's smallness and ignorance casts upon the human condition a light of tragic vanity. Montaigne's acceptance of the situation is—to use some of our other examples as convenient points of reference—more Erasmusian than Hamlet-like. If he asks questions which involve, to say the very least, the whole Renaissance conception of man's "dignity," the impression, as we listen to his voice, is never



really one of dark negation and melancholy. While man's advantages over other beings are quietly evaluated and discredited ("... this licence of thought ... is an advantage sold to him very dearly ... For from it springs the principal source of ... sin, sickness, irresolution, affliction, despair"), he maintains a balanced and often humorous tone in which even the frivolous aside of the personal essayist is not dissonant, but characteristic: "When I play with my cat, who knows but that she regards me more as a plaything than I do her?" Thus without raising his voice too much he achieves a point of view which suggests broadness and inclusiveness rather than gloom and despair. For, while his view of the "mediocrity" of man among other beings debunks any form of intellectual conceit, on the other hand an encompassing sense of natural fellowship in Creation is envisaged: "I have said all this to establish the resemblance to human conditions, and to bring us back and join us to the majority."

This sense of a "natural" fellowship seems to characterize not only Montaigne's view of the position of man in Creation but also his conception of man as a moral individual in relation to other men. The student may see this at the end of our final selection, where good is envisaged, as elsewhere valor, as a beautiful and self-rewarding act of "virtue":

There is . . . no goodness in which a well-born nature does not delight. . . . There is no small pleasure in

feeling oneself preserved from the contagion of so corrupt an age, and saying to oneself, 'Should any one look into my very soul, he would yet not find me guilty of the affliction or ruin of any man . . .' These testimonies of a good conscience please; and this natural satisfaction is a great boon to us, and the only payment that will never fail us.

Difficult as it is to reduce Montaigne's views to short and abstract statements, the reader will probably be left with the impression that here his vision of man, and of the possibility of a good life, is nearer to hopefulness than to despair. Though his attitude is far from Rabelais' optimism and exuberance, it too is based on a balance between the "natural" and the intellectual, between instinct and reason. He belittles, at times even scornfully, the power of the human intellect, and like Erasmus he points to instinctive simplicity of mind as being more conducive to happiness and even to true knowledge; but on the other hand the whole tone of his work, its intellectual sophistication, its very bulk, and the loving manner with which he attended to it, show that his own thought was not something that "sicklied o'er" his life, but something that gave it sustenance and delight. Thus we see in him some of the basic contrasts of the Renaissance mind—the acceptance and the rejection of the intellectual dignity of man—conducting not to disruption, but to temperately positive results. Though his work offers anything but the abstract scheme of an ideal man, and he is not proposing a model

or a recipe, yet in passages like the one cited in the preceding paragraph, some norm of the pattern of a truly virtuous man—in the sense expressed later by the French as “honest” (as in the phrase *honnête homme*)—seems unobtrusively to emerge. And though it is not imposed upon the audience, any reader is free to think that acceptance of this norm would result in better spiritual balance in the individual and a more harmonious and sensible fellowship in society. The author does not preach (“Others form man; I describe him . . .”) because his pattern of conduct is one which cannot be taught but only experienced. He limits himself to exemplifying it in his own wise and unheroic self.

#### SPENSER, THE FAERIE QUEENE

Spenser's major work is an epic poem. The epic form was classified, during the Renaissance, as one of the highest in literature, in accordance with the practice and example of antiquity. Of the classical authors Virgil, rather than Homer, was considered the master of the epic. One of the features of the Virgilian epic is the celebration of a contemporary figure—the poet's patron—and of the ideal he stands for, through the description of the high deeds of the poem's hero, to whom the patron's ancestry is traced; in the *Aeneid*, for instance, Aeneas' son Ascanius is supposedly Augustus' progenitor. Thus the material of epic poetry traditionally includes elements of glorious prophecy and celebra-

tion, such as appear in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. In so far as *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596), Spenser's unfinished masterpiece, is a celebration of Elizabeth and generally of British queenly glory, it is an epic in the traditional sense, following classical usage by tracing Gloriana's ancestry to Britomart, the poem's virtuous female knight, while the idea of Gloriana's wedding to Arthur conforms to the tradition that made Arthur the progenitor of Britain's rulers.

A more immediate literary influence on Spenser, both in manner and in matter, was the Italian Renaissance epic, in which materials from the Carolingian and Arthurian cycles had been handled and adapted. Of that genre the Italian master is Ariosto, in whose poem on the love insanity of Roland the world of chivalry is contemplated with a complex mixture of irony and nostalgia which is quite difficult to describe and which has remained unique in verse narrative.

Far from diminishing Spenser's originality, his indebtedness to Ariosto (and others) brings his own distinguishing traits into sharper evidence. In fact, Spenser's use of his sources may illustrate some of the native features of the English Renaissance in general. It is significant that when Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1532) was translated into Elizabethan English in 1591, the translator, John Harrington, drew from it elaborate moral significance or, as he called it, an allegory. True, Ariosto's own poem presents a

hero insane with love and, in the end, shows that his wisdom and his awareness of the proper knightly behavior are restored after a period of error; but Ariosto had no explicit moralizing intention, and it would be hard to extract any precise ethical codes from the infinite adventures contained in his poem. Spenser's poem not only implies the moral virtues but, among other things, is actually *about* them. In the same way, although Ariosto performs all the dedicatory motions and pretends that his patron descends from the poem's most virtuous hero, there is a perfunctory quality in his adulation. But Spenser's political allegories are more than a superficial homage to conventions; they are part of the poem's structure and meaning.

Spenser's position is demonstrated also by historical and biographical facts. Whatever may be the details of his career as a courtier, and particularly of his long service in Ireland, his general outlook was inspired by a transcendent concept of the British monarchy and the national glory of which Elizabeth was the symbol, and this attitude is reflected in the poem's political allegory and in its often criticized passages of adulation. The awareness of the practical shortcomings of politics and of the ugly aspects of court life could not, we must imagine, alter his view any more than the weakness of individual prelates alters church loyalty in the faithful. It is often noticed that the political allegory in the poem is not only less clear but also far

less interesting than the moral allegory; but obviously the two go hand in hand, since an ideally governed, God-sanctioned kingdom is sustained by the moral virtues of its monarch and his paladins. Arthur, who was to be the hero of the unfinished poem, was both the legendary progenitor of Britain's monarchs and the summation of all moral virtues.

Each book of the *Faerie Queene* presents a knight-hero who personifies a virtue—holiness, temperance, justice, and so on. The presence of an abstract moral scheme and of such "medieval" methods as allegory and personification should not make us forget, however, that this is a work of poetry—that is, one which ultimately stands or falls not on the validity of the abstract "verities" it contains, but on its ability to make our reading a lively imaginative experience.

A gentle Knight was pricking on  
the plaine,  
Ycladd in mightie armes and  
silver shielde,  
Wherein old dints of deepe  
woundes did remaine,  
The cruell markes of many a  
bloody fieldc.

The vague mystery of fairy tale, the beautiful narrative tempo of the stanza, the genuine tone of heroic "gentillesse," these and countless other elements affect us in these opening lines of the poem long before we know who this character is, or which virtue he stands for. This is not to deny the importance of the moral structure and teachings of the poem; on the con-

trary, it is meant to indicate in which directions we should look to account for the degree of their forcefulness. The solving of the allegorical puzzles will not take us very far; convenient tags, for that matter, have been placed by the poet himself. We know that Sir Guyon, the hero of the passage in our selection, stands for temperance, that the beasts killed by the palmer stand for passionate excesses, and so forth. But a full immersion in the poem, and understanding of it, will involve superseding these convenient signposts, as builders dispose of scaffoldings, and reaching the level where poetic and moral impact are one.

The question of aesthetic versus moral attraction especially interests us here because our selection happens to be, to a certain extent, a parable of it. The selection describes a place of pleasure, full of what at first sight looks like a profusion of colorful attractions and sensuously beautiful objects—a fairyland transcription, it may superficially seem, of Renaissance sumptuousness and luxuriance. All of it, however, turns out to be deceptive and unnatural; not only is it morally condemnable but it constitutes a basically barren sort of beauty. Readers have not infrequently observed that the manner in which the poet presents his spectacle shows that he is fundamentally attracted to it, and hence reveals a sort of duplicity in his attitude. Actually, the success of this piece consists in the way in which Spenser manages persuasively to build the vision of a

gorgeous sensuality and yet let us perceive the almost continuous underlayer of artificiality, impotence, and unfruitfulness. Here is Spenser's moral substratum wholly resolved into poetry.

### CERVANTES, *DON QUIXOTE*

Although *Don Quixote* was a popular success from the time Part I was published in 1605, it was only later recognized as important literature. This delay was due partly to the fact that in a period of established and well-defined genres like the epic, the tragedy, and the pastoral romance (Cervantes himself tried his hand frequently at some of these forms), the unconventional combination of elements in *Don Quixote* resulted in a work of considerable novelty, with the serious aspects hidden under a mocking surface.

The initial and overt purpose of the book was to satirize a very popular type of literature, the romances of chivalry. In those long yarns, which had to do with the Carolingian and Arthurian legends and were full of supernatural deeds of valor, implausible and complicated adventures, duels, and enchantments, the literature which had expressed the medieval spirit of chivalry and romance had degenerated to the same extent to which, in our day, certain conventions of romantic literature have degenerated in "pulp" fiction and film melodrama. Up to a point, then, what Cervantes set out to do was to produce a parody, the caricature of a literary type. But neither the na-

ture of his genius nor the particular method he chose allowed him to limit himself to such a relatively simple and direct undertaking. The actual method he followed in order to expose the silliness of the romances of chivalry was to show to what extraordinary consequences they would lead a man insanely infatuated with them, once this man set out to live "now" according to their patterns of action and belief. So what we have is not mere parody or caricature, for there is a great deal of difference between simply presenting a grotesque version of a story dealing with a remote and more or less imaginary world, and presenting a modern man deciding to live by the standards of that world in a modern and realistic context. The first consequence is a mingling of two different genres. On the one hand, as even the beginning reader of *Don Quixote* soon recognizes, much of the language and material of the book turns out to have the color and intonation of the glamorous world of chivalry. The fact that that world and that tone depend for their existence in the book on the powers of evocation and self-deception of the hero himself, makes them no less operative artistically, and adds, in fact, an important element of idealization. On the other hand, the chivalric world is continuously combined with the elements of contemporary life evoked by the narrator—the realities of landscape and talk, peasants and nobles, inns and highways. So the author can draw on two sources, roughly the realistic and the romantic,

truth and imagination, practical facts and metaphysical values. In this respect, in his having found a way to bring together concrete actuality and highly ideal values, Cervantes can be said to have fathered the modern novel.

The consequences of Cervantes' invention are more apparent when the reader begins to analyze a little more closely the nature of those two worlds, the romantic and the realistic, or the kind of impact which the first exercises on the second. The hero embodying the world of the romances is not, as we know, a cavalier of old; he is an impoverished country gentleman, adopting that code in the "modern" world. The code of chivalry is not simply and directly satirized; it is placed in a context different from its native one. The result of that new association is a new whole, a new unity. The "code" is renovated; it is put into a different perspective, given another chance.

We should remember in this connection that in the process of deterioration which the romances of chivalry had undergone, certain basically attractive ideals had become empty conventions—for instance, the ideals of love as devoted "service," of adventurousness, of loyalty to high concepts of valor and generosity. In the new context those values are re-examined. Incidentally, Cervantes may well have gained a practical sense of them in his own life, at the time of his early youth, when he was a warrior at Lepanto (the great victory of the European coalition against the

"infidels"), and a pirates' captive. Since he began writing *Don Quixote* in his late fifties, a vantage point from which his adventurous youth must have appeared impossibly remote, a factor of nostalgia—which could hardly have been present in a pure satire—may well have entered into his composition of the work. Furthermore, had Cervantes undertaken a direct caricature of the romance genre, the serious and noble values of chivalry could not have been made apparent except negatively, but in the context devised by him in *Don Quixote* they find a way to assert themselves positively also.

The book in its development is, to a considerable extent, the story of that assertion—of the impact that Don Quixote's revitalization of the chivalric code has on a contemporary world. We must remember, of course, that there is ambiguity in the way that assertion is made; it works slowly on the reader, as his own discovery rather than as the narrator's open suggestion. Actually, whatever attraction the chivalric world of his hero's vision may have had for Cervantes, he does not openly support Don Quixote at all; he even seems at times to go further in repudiating him than he needs to, for the hero is officially insane, and the narrator never tires of reminding us of this. One critic has described the attitude he affects toward his creature as "animosity." Nevertheless, by the very magniloquence and, often, the extraordinary coherence and beauty which the narrator allows his hero to dis-

play in his speeches in defense of his vision and of his code, we are gradually led to discover for ourselves the serious and important elements these contain; in fact, we suspect that the "animosity" ultimately does nothing but intensify our interest in Don Quixote and our sympathy for him. And in that process we are, as audience, simply repeating the experiences which many characters are having on the "stage" of the book, in their relationships with him.

Generally speaking, the encounters between the ordinary world and Don Quixote are encounters between the world of reality and that of illusion, between reason and imagination, ultimately between the world in which action is prompted by material considerations and interests, and a world in which action is prompted by ideal motives. Our selections exemplify these aspects of the experience. Among the first adventures are some which have most contributed to popularize the Don Quixote legend: he sees windmills and decides they are giants; country inns become castles; flocks of sheep, armies. Though the conclusions of such episodes often have the ludicrousness of slapstick comedy, there is a powerfully imposing quality about Don Quixote's insanity: his madness always has method, a commanding persistence and coherence. And there is perhaps an inevitable sense of moral grandeur in the spectacle of anyone remaining so unflinchingly faithful to his own vision. The world of "reason" may win in point of fact, but a residue of moral su-

periority is left with Quixote.

Besides, we increasingly realize that his own manner of action has greatness in itself, and not only the greatness of persistence: his purpose is to redress wrongs, to come to the aid of the afflicted, to offer generous help, to challenge danger and practice valor. And we finally feel the impact of the arguments which sustain his action—for example, in the section from Part II (the episode of the lions) in which he expounds “the meaning of valor.” The ridiculousness of the situation is counterbalanced by the basic seriousness of Quixote’s motives; his notion of courage for the sake of courage appears, and is recognized, as singularly noble, a sort of generous display of integrity in a world usually run on a lower plane. Thus the distinction between “reason” and “madness,” truth and illusion, becomes, to say the least, ambiguous. Don Quixote’s delusions are indeed exposed, once they are checked against hard facts, but the authority of such facts is, morally, questionable.

The effectiveness of Don Quixote’s conduct and vision is seen most clearly in his relation with Sancho Panza. An attempt to define that relation will be the best way for the student to come to grips with the book. It would be rather crude oversimplification to say that Don Quixote and Sancho represent illusion and reality, the world of the abstract and insane code of knight-errantry in contrast with the present world of down-to-earth practicalities. Actually Sancho, though his nature is strongly defined by such ele-

ments as his common sense, his earthy speech, his simple phrases studded with proverbs set against the hero’s magniloquence, is mainly characterized in his development by the degree to which he believes in his master. He is caught in the snare of Don Quixote’s vision; the seeds of the imaginative life are successfully implanted in him.

The impact on Sancho of Quixote’s view of life serves therefore to illustrate one of the important aspects of the hero and, we may finally say, one of the important aspects of Renaissance literature: the attempt, finally frustrated but extremely attractive as long as it lasts, of the individual mind to produce a vision and a system of its own, in a world which often seems to have lost a universal frame of reference and an ultimately satisfactory sense of the value and meaning of action. What Don Quixote presents is a vision of a world which, for all its aberrant qualities, appears generally to be more colorful and more thrilling, and also, incidentally, to be inspired by more honorable rules of conduct, than the world of ordinary people, “realism,” current affairs, private interests, easy jibes, and petty pranks. It is a world in which actions are performed out of a sense of their beauty and excitement, not for the sake of their utility or, as we would say now, of their practicality. It is, again, the world as stage, animated by “folly”; in this case the lights go out at the end, an end which is “reasonable” and therefore gloomy. Sancho provides the

major example of one who is exposed to that vision and absorbs that light while it lasts. How successfully he has done so is seen during the hero's death scene, in which he begs of his master not to die but to continue the play, as has been suggested, in a new dress. But at that final point the hero is "cured" and killed, and Sancho is restored to the petty interests of the world as he can see it by his own lights, after the cord connecting him to his imaginative master is cut by the latter's "repentance" and death.

### SHAKESPEARE, *HAMLET*

It is natural to include *Hamlet* (1601) in a selection of Renaissance literature because the play is undoubtedly the work of the English Renaissance which most clearly belongs to the literary consciousness of the world in general. Probably no character in Renaissance literature is more familiar to world audiences than Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; and he belongs to the world also in the sense that some of the influential interpretations of his nature have been developed outside the country and language of his origin, the most famous being the one offered by Goethe in *Wilhelm Meister*. The unparalleled reputation of the work may also have certain nonliterary causes—for instance, the fact that it is a play of which the central rôle is singularly cherished by actors in all languages as the test of stardom; and, conversely, the fact that audiences sometimes content themselves with a rather vague notion of the work as a whole

and concentrate on the attractively problematical and eloquent hero, and on the actor impersonating him, waiting for his famous soliloquies as a certain type of operagoer waits for the next aria of his favorite singer. But along with the impact of the protagonist, there are other and deeper reasons why the world in general should naturally have given *Hamlet* its place in the common patrimony of literature. It is a drama which concerns personages of superior station, and the conflicts and problems associated with men of high degree (themes which, incidentally, are encountered only rarely in literature nowadays); and it reveals these problems in terms of a particular family. Although classicist critics considered Shakespeare "irregular" and therefore, in a quite external sense, untraditional, the matter of *Hamlet* belongs to a great and recognizable tradition, presenting as it does an individual and domestic dimension along with a public one—the pattern of family conflict within the larger pattern of the *polis*—like the plays of antiquity which dealt with the Theban myth, such as *King Oedipus*.

This public dimension of *Hamlet* helps us see it, for our present purposes, in relation to the literature of the Renaissance. For the framework within which the characters are presented and come into conflict is a court—in spite of the Danish locale and the relatively remote period of the action, a plainly Renaissance court exhibiting the structure of interests to which Machiavelli's



*Prince* has potently drawn our attention. There is a ruler holding power, and much of the action is related to questions concerning the nature of that power—the way in which he has acquired it, and the ways in which it can be preserved. Moreover, there is a courtly structure: the King has several courtiers around him, among whom Hamlet, the heir apparent, is only the most prominent.

We have seen some of the forms of the Renaissance court pattern in earlier selections: in Castiglione, Rabelais, Machiavelli. The court served as the ruling nucleus of the polity, as an arena for conflicts of interest and of wit, as a setting for the cultivation and codification of aristocratic virtues (valor, physical and intellectual brilliance, "courtesy"). The basic positives of the cult of human achievement on earth, so prominent in the Renaissance, were given in courtly life their characteristic field of action and their testing ground. And as we have observed, the negatives (melancholy, sense of void and purposelessness) also emerged there.

Examining *Hamlet*, we soon realize that its temper belongs more to the negative than to the positive phase of the Renaissance. Certain outstanding forms of human endeavor (the establishment of earthly power, the display of gallantry, the confident attempt of the mind to grasp the world's picture and inspire purposeful action), which elsewhere are presented as highly worth while, or are at least soberly discussed in terms of their value and limits, seem to be

caught here in a condition of disorder and accompanied by a sense of vanity and void.

The way in which the state and the court of Denmark are presented is significant: they are shown in images of disease and rottenness. And here again, excessive stress on the protagonist himself must be avoided. His position as denouncer of the prevailing decadence, and the major basis for his denunciation—the murder of his father, which leads to his desire to obtain revenge and purify the court by destroying the present king—are central elements in the play; but they are not the *whole* play. The public situation is indicated, and Marcellus has pronounced his famous "Something is rotten . . .," before Hamlet has talked to the Ghost and learned the Ghost's version of events. Moreover, the sense of outside dangers and internal disruption everywhere transcends the personal story of Hamlet, of the revenge, of Claudius' crime; these are simply the signs of the breakdown, portents of a general situation. In this sense, we may tentatively say that the general theme of the play has to do with a kingdom, a society, a *polis*, going to pieces; or even more, with its realization that it has gone to pieces already. Concomitant with this is a sense of the vanity of those forms of human endeavor and power of which the kingdom and the court are symbols.

The tone which the dramatist wants to establish is evident from the opening scenes: the night air is full of dread premonitions; sentinels turn their

eyes toward the outside world, from which threats are coming; meantime, the Ghost has already made his appearance inside, a sinister omen. The kingdom, as we proceed, is presented in terms which are an almost point by point reversal of the ideal. Claudius, the *pater patriæ* and *pater familias*, whether we believe the Ghost's indictment or not (Hamlet does not necessarily, and some of his famous indecision has been attributed to his seeking evidence of the Ghost's truthfulness before acting), by marrying the Queen has committed an act which according to the code of the protagonist is corrupt. There is an overwhelming sense of disintegration in the body of the state, visible in the first court assembly and in all subsequent ones: in their various ways the two courtiers, Hamlet and Laertes, are aliens, thinking of departure; they offer, around their king, a picture which is quite unlike that of the conventional paladins, supports of the throne, in a well-mannered and well-mannered court. (In Rabelais' "kingdom," when Grangousier is ruler, the pattern is also a courtly and knightly one, but the young heir, Gargantua, who is like Hamlet a university student, readily abandons his studies to answer the fatherland's call; here the direction is the opposite.)

On the other hand, as in all late and decadent phases of a social or artistic structure (the court in a sense is both), instead of the substance we have the semblance, the ornate and empty façades, of which the more enlightened members of

the group are mockingly aware. Thus Polonius, who after Hamlet is the major figure in the King's retinue, is presented satirically in his empty formalities of speech and conventional norms of behavior. And there are numerous instances (Osric is one) of manners being replaced by mannerisms. Hence the way in which courtly life is represented in the play suggests always the hollow, the fractured, the crooked. The traditional forms and institutions of gentle living, and all the pomps and solemnities, are marred by corruption and distortion. Courtship and love are reduced to Hamlet's mockery of a "civil conversation" in the play scene, his phrases carrying not Castiglione's Platonic loftiness and the repartee of "gentilcsse," but punning undercurrents of bawdiness. The theater, a traditional institution of courtly living, is "politically" used by the hero as a device to expose the King's crime. There are elements of macabre caricature in the play's treatment of the solemn theme of death (see, for instance, the manner of Polonius' death, which is a sort of sarcastic version of a cloak-and-dagger scene; or the effect of the clownish gravediggers' talk). Finally, the arms tournament, the typical occasion for the display of courtiers' gallantry in front of their king, is here turned by the scheming of the King himself into the play's conclusive scene of carnage. And the person who, on the King's behalf, invites Hamlet to that feast is Osric, the "waterfly," the caricature of the hollow courtier.

This sense of corruption and decadence dominates the general temper of the action in the play, and it obviously qualifies the character of Hamlet, his indecision, his sense of vanity and disenchantment with the world he lives in. In him the relation between thought and deed, intent and realization, is confused in the same way that the norms and institutions which would regulate the life of a well-ordered court have been deprived of their original purpose and beauty. He and the King are the two "mighty opposites," and it can be argued that against Hamlet's indecision and negativism the King presents a more positive scheme of action, at least in the purely Machiavellian sense, at the level of practical power politics. But even this conclusion will prove only partly true. There are indeed moments in which all that the King seems to wish for himself is to forget the past and rule honorably. He advises Hamlet not to mourn his father excessively, for melancholy is not according to "nature." He shows on various occasions a high and competent conception of his office: a culminating instance is the courageous and cunning way in which he confronts and handles Laertes' wrath. The point can be made that since his life is obviously threatened by Hamlet (who was seeking to kill him when by mistake he killed Polonius instead), the King acts within a legitimate pattern of politics in wanting to have Hamlet liquidated. But this argument cannot be carried so far as to demonstrate that he repre-

sents a fully positive attitude toward life and the world, even in the strictly amoral terms of power technique. For in fact his action is corroded by an element alien to that technique—the vexations of his own conscience. In spite of his energy and his extrovert qualities he too becomes part of the negative picture of disruption, and lacks concentration of purpose. The images of decay and putrescence which characterize the general picture of his court extend to his own speech: his "offense," in his own words, "smells to heaven."

To conclude, *Hamlet* as a Renaissance tragedy presents a world particularly "out of joint," a world which, having lost long ago the sense of a grand extra-temporal design which was so important to the medieval man (to Hamlet the thought of the afterlife is even more puzzling and dark than that of this life), looks with an even greater sense of disenchantment at the circle of temporal action symbolized by the kingdom and the court. These could have offered certain codes of conduct and certain objects of allegiance which would have given individual action its purposefulness, but now their order has been destroyed. Ideals which once had power and freshness have lost their vigor under the impact of satiety, doubt, and melancholy.

Since communal values are so degraded, it is natural to ask in the end whether some alternative attempt at a settlement can be seen, with Hamlet, like other Renaissance heroes, adopting an individual code of conduct, however extravagant. On the whole,

Hamlet seems too steeped in his own hopelessness, and in the courtly mechanism to which he inevitably belongs, to be able to save himself through some sort of personal intellectual and moral compromise or through his own version of total escape or total dream; for his antic disposition is a strategy, his "folly" is political. Still, the usual temper of his brooding and often moralizing speech, his melancholy and dissatisfaction, his very desire for revenge, do seem to imply an aspiration toward some form of moral beauty, a nostalgia for a world—as the King his father's must have been—of clean allegiances and respected codes of honor. One thing worth examining in this connection is his attitude toward Fortinbras. Fortinbras is a marginal character, but our attention is emphatically drawn to him both at the very opening and at the very close of the play.

There is no doubt that while in the play certain positive virtues—such as friendship, loyalty, and truthfulness—are represented by the very prominent Horatio, who will live on to give a true report of Hamlet, in Fortinbras the ideals of gallant knighthood, which in the present court have been so corrupted and lost, seem to have been preserved at their purest. And he has, of course, Hamlet's "dying voice." Earlier, in Act IV, Scene 4, Hamlet has seen him move with his army toward an enterprise characterized by the flimsiness of its material rewards. In a world where all matter seems corrupt, Hamlet's qualified sympathy for that gratuitous display of honor for honor's sake, of valor "even for an egg-shell," of death braved "for a fantasy," calls to mind some of the serious aspects of the Quixotic code.

#### LIVES, WRITINGS, AND CRITICISM

*Biographical and critical works are listed only if they are available in English.*

##### DESIDERIUS ERASMUS

**LIFE AND WRITINGS.** Born out of wedlock to a physician's daughter and a father who later became a priest, in 1466?, apparently at Rotterdam, for he later referred to himself as Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus. He was schooled at Gouda, then at Deventer, where Humanistic masters fostered his love of good letters. After both parents died, his guardians sent him, with an older brother, to Hertogenbosch and later to the Augustinian Canons at Steyn, although his desire had been to enter a university. He was ordained a priest on April 25, 1492. His Humanistic aspirations found an outlet in 1494 when he became Latin secretary to Henry of Bergen, bishop of Cambrai, through whose help, in 1495, he entered the college of Montaigu at the University of Paris. College discipline was very strict, but in the following year Erasmus had lodgings in town and received pupils. With a pupil, William

Blount, Baron Mountjoy, he paid a first visit to England in 1499-1500 and met Thomas More and John Colet, the latter encouraging him toward serious theological study and a direct scholarly approach to the early Church Fathers. In the following years he traveled on the Continent, stopping for an interval at Louvain, his first collection of *Adages* (*Adagia*, short sayings from classical authors) appeared in Paris in 1500, and his *Handbook of the Christian Knight* (*Enchiridion militis christianis*), a plea for the return to primitive Christian simplicity, was published at Antwerp in 1504. After a second visit to England in 1505-1506, during which he met Warham, the archbishop of Canterbury, a chance to act as tutor to the son of Henry VII's physician, Boeri, enabled him to fulfill the humanist's aspiration to visit Italy. There he spent some time at the universities of Turin (where he received a doctorate of theology) and

Bologna, visited Padua and Florence, and conversed with high church dignitaries in Rome; in Venice, Aldo Manuzio, the great Humanistic printer, became a friend and published the enlarged *Adages*. In 1509 he returned to England; he wrote there in that year the *Praise of Folly* (*Moriae encomium*). During this third and longest residence (until 1514) he lectured in Greek and divinity at Cambridge and completed his work on the Greek New Testament. After leaving England, Erasmus, whose life offers the highest illustration of the type of the cosmopolitan Humanist, particularly in his wish to unite Humanistic learning and religious piety, continued to travel on the Continent, finally making his most permanent home in Basel, a center whose cultural importance cannot be overestimated, especially as the seat of the printing house of Frobenius, whose general editor Erasmus became. In 1529 religious disturbances and the victories of the Swiss reformers caused him to move to Freiburg in the Breisgau, the German university town in the Black Forest. Erasmus' attitude toward the reformers (Luther in Germany, Zwingli in Switzerland) was typical: after having tried to promote an impartial arbitration of the question between Luther and the Roman church, he was alienated by excesses on both sides. The shattering news of More's execution in England reached him in Freiburg. He returned to Basel in 1535 and died there in July, 1536. Besides his literary works and pamphlets, his editions of the Church Fathers, and the like, his letters (about three thousand) are an important document of the cultural life of the period.

**BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.** P. S. Allen, *The Age of Erasmus*, 1914, and *Erasmus, Lectures and Wayfaring Sketches*, 1934; *The Praise of Folly by Desiderius Erasmus*, edited by Leonard F. Dean, a new translation, with introduction and notes, 1946; Christopher Hollis, *Erasmus*, 1933; Johan Huizinga, *Erasmus*, 1924; Joseph Mangan, *The Life, Character and Influence of Desiderius Erasmus*, 1926; Preserved Smith, *Erasmus*, 1923; Stefan Zweig, *Erasmus*, 1934.

#### BALDEAR CASTIGLIONE

**LIFE AND WRITINGS.** Born at Casatico, near Mantua, in 1487. His father, Cristoforo, was a courtier, and his mother was a Gonzaga, related to the lords of Mantua. He received a Humanistic education in Milan. From 1499 to 1503 he was in the service of Francesco Gonzaga, lord of Mantua, and from 1504 to 1513 he was at Urbino in the service (diplomatic and military) of Guidobaldo da Montefeltro (whose wife was a Gonzaga) and of Francesco

Maria della Rovere, by whom he was made a count. In 1506 he went to England on an embassy to the court of Henry VII, from whom he received, on behalf of his lord, the Order of the Garter, and to whom he presented a painting by Raphael. In 1515 he was again with the Gonzagas, who made him their ambassador to Pope Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici). In Rome his friends included Raphael and Michelangelo, and he saw Renaissance social and intellectual life at its most brilliant; he thus not only codified the ideal of the refined and "virtuous" courtier but also embodied it. In 1525 Pope Clement VII made him his ambassador to the court of Emperor Charles V in Spain. Castiglione's premature death there, at Toledo in 1529, was probably caused in part by sorrow at his failure to foresee the Emperor's designs as they most dramatically took shape in the "sack of Rome" in 1527. *The Book of the Courtier* (*Il libro del cortegiano*), in which the court of Urbino is idealized, was written between 1508 and 1516 and published, after constant revisions, in 1528 in Venice.

**BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.** Julia Cartwright Ady, *Baldassare Castiglione, the Perfect Courtier: His Life and Letters*, 1908; Ralph Roeder, *The Man of the Renaissance; Four Lawgivers: Savonarola, Machiavelli, Castiglione, Ariosto*, 1933; Wilhelm Schenk, "The Cortegiano and the Civilization of the Renaissance," *Scrutiny*, XVI, Summer, 1949, 93-103.

#### NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

**LIFE AND WRITINGS.** Born in Florence on May 3, 1469. His father was a jurist and owned some land. Little is known of his schooling; it is obvious from his work that he knew the Latin and Italian writers well. He entered public life in 1494 as a clerk, and from 1498 to 1512 was secretary to the second chancery of the commune of Florence, whose magistrates were in charge of internal and war affairs. In connection with the duties of this post, during the war against Pisa he dealt with military problems firsthand, at this time forming his aversion to mercenary troops. He went on many diplomatic missions—among others, to King Louis XII of France, in 1500, and in 1502 to Cesare Borgia, whose ruthless conquest of the Romagna he described in a booklet showing direct insight into the type of the amoral and technically efficient "prince." In 1506 he went on a mission to Pope Julius II, whose expedition into the Romagna he followed closely. From his missions to Emperor Maximilian (1508) and again to the king of France (1509) he drew his two books of observations or *Portraits* (*Ritratti*) of the affairs of those coun-

tries—*Ritratto delle cose della Magna*, written in 1508; and *Ritratto di cose di Francia*, written in 1510. Pre-eminently a student of politics and an observer, he endeavored to apply his experience of other states to the strengthening of his own, the Florentine Republic, and busied himself in 1507 with the establishment of a Florentine militia, encountering great difficulties. When the republican regime came to an end, Machiavelli lost his post and was banned from the city though forbidden to leave Florentine territory; the new regime under the Medici accused him unjustly of conspiracy, and he was released only after a period of imprisonment and torture. To the time of his exile spent near San Casciano, a few miles from Florence, where he retired with his wife, Marietta Corsini, and five children, we owe the major works: the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy* (*Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, 1513–1521) and *The Prince* (*Il principe*); the latter was written in 1513, with the hope of obtaining public office from the Medici. In 1520 he was employed on an insignificant commercial mission to Lucca; in the same year he was commissioned to write a history of Florence, which he presented in 1525 to the Pope, Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici). He was sent on a mission to the papal president of the Romagna, who happened to be the great historian Francesco Guicciardini; and in 1526, conscious of imminent dangers, he was employed in the work for the military fortifications of Florence. The fate of the Medici at that point was connected with the larger struggle between King Francis I of France and the Holy Roman emperor, Charles V. Pope Clement's siding with the king of France led to the disastrous "sack of Rome"; the repercussion in Florence was the collapse of Medici domination. With the re-establishment of the republic Machiavelli's hopes rose, but they came to naught because he now was regarded as a Medici sympathizer. This last disappointment may have accelerated his end. He died on June 22, 1527, and was buried in the church of Santa Croce. He has a place in literature also for a short novel and two plays, one of which, *The Mandrake* (*La mandragola*), first performed in the early 1520's, is among the most outstanding Italian comedies.

**BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.** Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, 1946; Allan H. Gilbert, *Machiavelli's Prince and Its Forerunners*, 1938; Ettore Janni, *Machiavelli*, 1930; Giuseppe Prezzolini, *Niccolò Machiavelli the Florentine*, 1928; Ralph Roeder, *The Man of the Renaissance: Four Lawgivers: Savona-*

*rola, Machiavelli, Castiglione, Aretino*, 1933. Pasquale Villari, *The Life and Times of Niccolò Machiavelli*, 1929.

#### FRANÇOIS RABELAIS

**LIFE AND WRITINGS.** Born probably about 1494–1495 into a middle-class landowning family at La Devinière, near Chinon in the province of Touraine. The father was a successful lawyer. Rabelais apparently saw in a monastic career an opportunity for study; he was trained as a novice in the Franciscan order in the monastery of La Baumette at Angers. Later, as a monk in the Franciscan monastery of Puy-Saint-Martin at Fontenay-le-Comte, he busied himself especially with the "new learning" (Greek and other Humanistic studies), which was suspect to conventional theologians. In 1524 he obtained authorization from Pope Clement VII to transfer to the less strict Benedictine order. He had close and continuous contacts, both personal and epistolary, with prominent Humanists and jurists. He probably studied law at Poitiers. Between 1527 and 1530 he seems to have traveled considerably, and probably to have studied medicine at the University of Paris, a supposition warranted by the fact that when in 1530 he entered the University of Montpellier as a medical student, he received the degree of bachelor of medicine in two months. In 1532 he was a physician in the important hospital of the Pont-du-Rhône, at Lyon, and practiced medicine with success. In the same year he published, under the name of Alcofribas Nasier, an anagram of his own name, the volume of *Pantagruel* which now constitutes Book II of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. The story of Gargantua, the present Book I, appeared in 1534. In that year Rabelais traveled to Rome as personal physician to Jean du Bellay, then bishop of Paris and later a cardinal. In Rome in 1536 Rabelais obtained papal absolution for having discarded the monk's robe without authorization; later in the same year, back in France, his status became that of a secular priest. In 1537 he received his doctorate of medicine at Montpellier and held lectures there, using the Greek physicians' texts in the original. In the following years he traveled widely, and also acquired some standing at court, holding a minor post in the retinue of King Francis I. In 1538 he witnessed the historical meeting between Francis and Charles V at Aigues-Mortes. Court contacts helped him counteract the condemnations of his literary work by the theologians of the Sorbonne. The seriousness of his difficulties—arising out of accusations of heresy and leanings toward the Reformation—varied according to the pro-

tection that the court could grant him, and his own success in compromising. After Book III of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1546) was banned, he resided for two years in voluntary exile at Metz. He was in Rome again in 1548, and in 1551 he was appointed to the two curacies of Saint-Martin-de-Meudon and Saint-Cristophe-de-Jambet, both of which he resigned early in 1553 because of ill health. The tradition is that he died in Paris, in the Rue des Jardins, probably in April of that year. Book IV of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, which had appeared in 1552, had also been banned; a fifth Book, of doubtful authenticity, appeared in 1562-1564.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Anatole France, *François Rabelais*, 1929; A. J. Nock and C. R. Wilson, *François Rabelais: The Man and His Work*, 1929; Jean Plattard, *The Life of Rabelais*, 1930; Samuel Putman, *Rabelais, Man of the Renaissance*, 1930; Francis Watson, *Laughter for Pluto: A Book about Rabelais*, 1933.

#### BENVENUTO CELLINI

LIFE AND WRITINGS. Born in Florence on November 1, 1500; his father, Giovanni, a musician and architect, wished the son to be a musician, but Benvenuto trained himself as a goldsmith and silversmith. An extraordinary craftsman and a very temperamental man, he early showed his inclination to produce refined objects of art and to indulge in violent quarrels; it was his involvement in a brawl in 1523 that compelled him to escape from Florence (dressed as a monk) and find refuge in Rome. His Roman residence, interrupted by several journeys, covered the years 1521-1540. Here he was a participant in the historical events (including the "sack of Rome," 1527) of which he gives a colorful account in his autobiography, while the most outstanding private event was his killing of his bitter enemy Pompeo de' Capitaneis. Both Pope Clement VII and his successor, Paul III (Alessandro Farnese), were his patrons. Pier Luigi Farnese, the son of Paul III, was his enemy and successfully accused him of theft. Consequently Cellini was imprisoned in Castel Sant'Angelo, whence he once escaped; he was caught again and placed in a particularly horrible cell, where he claims to have received supernatural visions and where he composed religious poems and drew an effigy of Christ in coal on a wall. During a journey some time before, he had become acquainted with the king of France, Francis I, who was now instrumental in his liberation. Cellini spent the years 1540-1545 in France, working with his apprentices in the castle of the Petit Nesle. In 1545 he moved back to Florence, where his

patron was the duke of Florence, Cosimo de' Medici, and where he stayed until his death. The major achievements of this long last period were in the arts; his culminating triumph was at the dedication, in April, 1554, in the Piazza della Signoria, of the statue of Perseus, to the casting of which he had devoted heroic efforts. As thanksgiving for that great success he went on a week's pilgrimage. One of his last works was the white crucifix on a black cross which is now at the Escorial. He was long ill and died poor in February, 1571; he is buried in the church of the Santissima Annunziata in Florence. The *Autobiography* (*La vita di Benvenuto Cellini*), mainly dictated to an apprentice, was begun in 1558 and reaches only the year 1562. It was first printed in 1728 and soon became famous. It was translated into German by Goethe.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Cellini's best biography is, of course, the one written by himself. See also Royal Cortissoz, *Benvenuto Cellini, Artist and Writer*, 1906.

#### MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

LIFE AND WRITINGS. Michel Eyquem de Montaigne was born on February 28, 1533, in the castle of Montaigne (in the Bordeaux region), which had been bought by his great-grandfather and from which his family of traders derived their surname. His father, Pierre Eyquem, was for two terms mayor of Bordeaux and had fought in Italy under King Francis I. The writer's inclination to tolerance and naturalness may have had its origin in certain aspects of his background and early training: his mother, of Spanish-Jewish descent, was a Protestant, as were his brother Beauregard and his sister Jeanne; the third of nine children, Michel himself, like his other brothers and sisters, was raised a Catholic. His father, though no man of learning, had unconventional ideas of upbringing: Michel, who had a peasant nurse and peasant godparents, was awakened in the morning by the sound of music and had Latin taught him as his mother tongue, by a German tutor. At six he went to the famous Collège de Guienne at Bordeaux; later he studied law, probably at Toulouse. In his youth he already knew court life firsthand. (At the court celebrations at Rouen for the majority of Charles IX in 1560, he saw among other things the cannibals, brought from Brazil, who became the subject of the famous essay.) In 1557 he was a member of the Bordeaux parliament; during that period he formed the deepest friendship of his life, with the young nobleman and fellow lawyer Étienne de la Boétie, who was to die a few years later. During his friend's last illness, Montaigne assisted

him day and night despite the contagiousness of the disease. In 1565 he married Françoise de la Chassaigne, daughter of a colleague in the Bordeaux parliament, to whom he was temperately attached. It is difficult to say whether disappointed political ambitions contributed in any relevant measure to Montaigne's decision to "retire" at thirty-eight to his castle of Montaigne and devote himself to meditation and writing. At any rate, his residence there had various interruptions. The country was split between the Protestants, led by Henry of Navarre, and two Catholic factions: those faithful to the reigning Valois kings (first Charles IX and then Henry III), and the "leaguers" or followers of the house of Guise. In the midst of such conflicts Montaigne's attitude was balanced and conservative (both Henry III of Valois and Henry of Navarre bestowed honors upon him), though his sympathies went to the un-fanatical Navarre, the future founder of the Bourbon dynasty as Henry IV. In 1574 Montaigne attempted to mediate an agreement between him and the Duke of Guise. In 1580 he undertook a journey through Switzerland, Germany, Italy (partly to cure his gallstones), and while in Italy he received news that he had been appointed mayor of Bordeaux. He held that office competently for two terms (1581-1585). Toward the end of his life he began an important friendship with the intelligent and ardently devoted Marie de Gournay, who became a kind of adopted daughter and was his literary executrix. When his favorite, Henry of Navarre, who had visited him twice in his castle, became king, Montaigne expressed his joy, though he refused Henry's offers of money; he did not live to witness in Paris, as he probably would have, the entry of the king turned Catholic ("Paris is well worth a Mass") for he died on September 13, 1592; he was buried in a church in Bordeaux. The *Essays* (*Essais*), which Montaigne started as a collection of interesting quotations, observations, remarkable events, and the like, and slowly developed to their large form and bulk, are divided into three books: Books I and II were first published in 1580; Book III (together with Books I and II revised and amplified) appeared in 1588. A posthumous edition prepared by Mlle. de Gournay, and containing some further additions, appeared in 1595. A noteworthy early English translation by John Florio was published in 1603.

**BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.** Edward Dowden, *Michel de Montaigne*, 1906; Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Montaigne, or The Skeptic," in *Representative Men*,

1850; Donald M. Frame, introduction to Montaigne's *Selected Essays*, 1943; André Gide, *Montaigne, An Essay in Two Parts*, 1929; André Lamandé, *Montaigne, Grave and Gay*, 1928; John Middleton Murry, "Montaigne," in *Heroes of Thought*, 1938; Grace Norton, *The Spirit of Montaigne*, 1908; J. M. Robertson, *Montaigne and Shakespeare*, second edition, 1909; Samuel A. Tannenbaum, *Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, A Concise Biography*, 1942; George C. Taylor, *Shakespeare's Debt to Montaigne*, 1925; Irene C. Willis, *Montaigne*, 1927.

#### EDMUND SPENSER

**LIFE AND WRITINGS.** Born into the London middle class, probably in 1552, Spenser attended the then new Merchant Taylors' School under Richard Mulcaster, a severe but interesting educator; and in 1569 entered Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, where he was able to spend seven years, supported partly by work and by a benefactor's help; he received his B.A. in 1573 and his M.A. in 1576. During this period he acquired a good knowledge of literature and of French and Italian. A friend at college was Gabriel Harvey, with whom he debated problems of English and classical metrics, and whose unfavorable view of medieval and "romantic" inspiration evidently failed to influence him in the composition of the *Faerie Queene*. For a short period after leaving the university, Spenser was secretary to the Master of Pembroke, John Young, bishop of Rochester. In 1579 he was introduced to Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, favorite of the Queen and one of the most influential men in England, and he lived for a time at Leicester House in London. He soon met Philip Sidney, Leicester's kinsman, to whom he dedicated his *Shepheards Calendar*, a group of twelve pastoral eclogues published that year, and in October he married a girl of nineteen named Machabeus Chyld (possibly the Rosalind of the *Calendar*), who bore him a son and a daughter and died in 1591. In 1580 Spenser went to Ireland, then turbulent with rebellion, as private secretary to the newly appointed lord deputy, Lord Grey of Wilton. His post gave him firsthand knowledge of politics, administration, and the battlefield; after Grey's recall to England he continued to hold various government offices in Ireland, and in 1586 he was granted a three-thousand-acre estate including Kilcolman Castle in County Cork. Sir Walter Raleigh visited him there in 1589 and having heard him read from the first three books of the *Faerie Queene* encouraged him to go to London and start publication. The three



books appeared with great success in January, 1590. Material courtly reward did not extend beyond an annual pension; the poet returned to Kilcolman in 1591; his *Complaints* of that year partly reflect his disappointment. In 1594 he married Elizabeth Boyle, to whom he had addressed the sonnet cycle *Amoretti*, published in 1595; the *Epithalamion*, celebrating the marriage, also appeared in 1595, the year of a new visit to England. In 1596 the three new books of the *Faerie Queene* were published, and the *Prothalamion* was written. In 1597 he returned to Ireland. In 1598 the Irish rebellion under the Earl of Tyrone broke out, about the time Spenser was appointed high sheriff of Cork. Shortly after he escaped from Kilcolman Castle, it was captured and burned. Spenser reached London late that year and died there in poverty in January, 1599. He was buried near Chaucer in Westminster Abbey. His political dialogue, *View of the Present State of Ireland*, written in 1596 and regarded as cynical by some, was first printed in 1633.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Leicester Bradner, *Edmund Spenser and the Faerie Queene*, 1948; B. E. C. Davis, *Edmund Spenser*, 1933; H. S. V. Jones, *A Spenser Handbook*, 1930; C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, 1936, Chapter 7; William L. Renwick, *Edmund Spenser: An Essay on Renaissance Poetry*, 1925; Janet Spens, *Spenser's Faerie Queene: An Interpretation*, 1934.

#### MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

LIFE AND WRITINGS. Son of an apothecary, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was born in 1547 in Alcalá de Henares, a university town near Madrid. Almost nothing is known of his early life and education. In a work published in 1569 he is mentioned as a favorite pupil by a Madrid Humanist, Juan López. Records indicate that by the end of that year he had left Spain and was living in Rome, for a while in the service of Giulio Acquaviva, later a cardinal. Enlisting in the Spanish fleet under the command of Don John of Austria, Cervantes engaged in the struggle of the allied forces of Christendom against the Turks. He was at the crucial battle of Lepanto (1571), where he fought valiantly in spite of fever and received three gunshot wounds, one of which permanently impaired the use of his left hand, "for the greater glory of the right." After further military engagements and garrison duty at Palermo and Naples, with his brother Rodrigo, and carrying testimonials from Don John and the viceroy of Sicily, he began the journey back to Spain, where he hoped to obtain a captaincy. In September, 1575, their boat was cap-

tured near the Marseilles coast by Barbary pirates, and the two brothers, taken prisoner, were brought to Algiers. Cervantes' captors, considering him a person of some consequence, held him as a slave for a good ransom. He repeatedly attempted to escape, and his daring and fortitude excited the admiration of Hassan Pasha, the viceroy of Algiers, who at length bought Cervantes for five hundred crowns. Nevertheless, Rodrigo was ransomed after two years of captivity, while Cervantes' own liberation took five.

He was freed on September 15, 1580 and reached Madrid in December of that year. Here his literary career started rather un auspiciously; he wrote twenty or thirty plays, with little success, and in 1585 published his pastoral romance *Galatea*. At about this time he had a natural daughter by Ana Franca de Rojas, and during the same period he married Catalina de Salazar, eighteen years his junior. Seeking non-literary employment, he obtained a position in the navy, requisitioning and collecting supplies for the Invincible Armada. There seem to have been irregularities in his administration, for which he was held responsible if not directly guilty; he spent several intervals in prison. In 1590 he tried unsuccessfully to obtain colonial employment in the New World. Later he had a post as tax collector in the Granada, province. He was dismissed from government service in 1597. The following years are most obscure; there is a tradition that *Don Quixote* was first conceived and planned in prison at Seville. In 1604 he was at Valladolid, then the temporary capital, living in sordid surroundings with the numerous women of his family (his wife, daughter, niece, and two sisters). There he obtained in late 1604 the official license for publication of *Don Quixote* (Part I). The book appeared in 1605 and was a popular success. Cervantes followed the court's return to Madrid, where he still lived poorly in spite of a vogue with readers which quickly made his heroes proverbial figures. A false continuation of the story soon appeared, and Cervantes' own continuation (*Don Quixote*, Part II) was published in 1615. His *Exemplary Tales* (*Novelas ejemplares*) had appeared in 1613. He died on April 23, 1616 and was buried in the convent of the Barefooted Trinitarian nuns. *Persiles and Sigismunda* (*Persiles y Sigismunda*), his last novel, was published posthumously in 1617.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. W. H. Auden, "Ironie Hero: Some Reflections on *Don Quixote*," *Horizon*, XX, August, 1949, 86-94; A. F. G. Bell, *Cervantes*,

1947; Gerald Brenan, "Novelist-Philosophers: Cervantes," *Horizon*, XVIII, July, 1948, 25-46; J. Fitzmaurice-Kelly, *Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*, 1913; Joseph Wood Krutch, "Cervantes," in *Five Masters*, 1930; Salvador de Madariaga, *Don Quixote: An Introductory Essay in Psychology*, 1935; Rudolph Schevill, *Cervantes*, 1919; Miguel de Unamuno, *The Life of Don Quixote and Sancho*, 1927.

#### WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**LIFE AND WRITINGS.** Born in April, 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire, then a rural community with a population of less than two thousand, of which his father, John Shakespeare, was a prominent and prosperous member. Little is known of Shakespeare's early life beyond conjecture or legend; he probably received the education offered by the good local grammar school, with emphasis on Latin; at eighteen he married a farmer's daughter, Anne Hathaway, seven or eight years his senior; there are baptismal records of their children, Susanna (1583) and the twins Hamnet and Judith (1585). After a gap of seven years, records show Shakespeare in 1592 already a successful and many-talented playwright in London; in 1594 he was a sharer in a prominent players' company of which the Lord Chamberlain was patron and the famous actors Burbage and Kempe were members, while literary distinction of a type that was then more highly respected came from successful poems (*Venus and Adonis*, 1593; *The Rape of Lucrece*, 1594). By 1596, of his now best-known plays he had written *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Merchant of Venice*; in 1597-1598, with the two parts of *Henry IV* he added Falstaff to his growing list of famous characters.

The Chamberlain's men had been playing at the Theatre, north of the city of London, and later at the Cur-

tain; in 1598 the Theatre was demolished, and the Globe, a large playhouse south of the Thames, was built, Shakespeare sharing in the expenses. Increased prosperity had brought social advancement: in 1596 the College of Heralds had sanctioned Shakespeare's claim to a gentleman's station by recognizing the family's coat of arms; in the same period he had bought New Place, a large house in his home town. In 1599, *Henry V*, the last of the plays centering in the Lancastrian kings, was followed by the first of the great Roman tragedies, *Julius Caesar*. The major plays belong to the following period; this is a usual dating of the most famous: *Hamlet*, 1601; *King Lear*, 1605; *Macbeth*, 1606; *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1607; *The Tempest*, 1611. Queen Elizabeth had favored the players, and her successor, James I, directly patronized them; the Lord Chamberlain's company thus became the King's men. In 1608, besides the Globe, they acquired an enclosed playhouse in Blackfriars, in the city of London, for winter entertainment. At about that time Shakespeare seems to have retired from the stage, and certainly from then on he wrote fewer plays. He lived most of the time at Stratford until his death there on April 23, 1616.

**BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.** Oscar J. Campbell, "What Is the Matter with Hamlet?" *Yale Review*, XXXII, Winter, 1943, 309-322; E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, 1930; Francis Fergusson, "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: the Analogy of Action," in *The Idea of a Theater*, 1949; H. Granville-Barker, *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, Vol. I, 1936; Maynard Mack, "The World of Hamlet," *Yale Review*, XLI, Summer, 1952, 502-23; E. E. Stoll, *Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study*, 1919; John Dover Wilson, *What Happens in 'Hamlet'*, 1935.

## DESIDERIUS ERASMUS

(1466?-1536)

### The Praise of Folly (Moriae encomium)\*

#### I. Folly Herself

#### Folly Speaks:

No matter what is ordinarily said about me (and I am not ignorant of how bad the name of Folly sounds, even to the biggest fools), I am still the one, the only one I may say, whose influence makes

\* Abridged. Written in 1509. Our text is from *Erasmus: In Praise of Folly*, a

new translation by Leonard F. Dean. Hendricks House Farrar Straus, 1946.

Gods and men cheerful. A convincing proof of this is that as soon as I began to speak to this great audience, all faces suddenly brightened with a new and unusual gaiety, all frowns disappeared, and you applauded hilariously. Now you seem intoxicated with nectar, and also with nepenthe,<sup>1</sup> like the gods of Homer; whereas a moment ago you were sad and careworn, as if you had just come out of the cave of Trophonius.<sup>2</sup> Just as a new and youthful color reappears everywhere when the sun first shows its beautiful, golden face to the earth, or when spring breathes softly after a hard winter, so your faces changed at the sight of me. And thus what great orators can hardly accomplish with long and elaborate speeches, namely the banishment of care, I have done with my appearance alone.

. . . Since my ancestry is not known to many, I will undertake to describe it, with the Muses' kind assistance. My father was neither Chaos, Orcus, Saturn, Japetus, nor any other of that obsolete and senile set of gods; on the contrary he was Plutus,<sup>3</sup> the real father of men and gods, despite the opinion of Hesiod,<sup>4</sup> Homer, and Jove himself. Now, as always, one nod from Plutus turns everything sacred or profane upside down. By his decision wars, peace, empires, plans, judgments, assemblies, marriages, treaties, pacts, laws, arts, sports, solemnities (I am almost out of breath)—in short, all public and private affairs are governed. Without his help, all the poets' multitude of gods, even, I may boldly say, the chief ones, either would not exist or would have to live leanly at home. Not even Pallas can help the person who arouses Plutus' anger, but with his favor one can laugh at Jove's thunderbolts. What a magnificent father! He did not beget me out of his head, as Jupiter did that grim and gloomy Pallas, but from Youth, the best-looking as well as the gayest of all the nymphs. Nor was this done dully in wedlock, in the way that lame blacksmith<sup>5</sup> was conceived, but more pleasantly in passion, as old Homer puts it. It should also be clearly understood that I was not born of Aristophanes' worn-out and weak-eyed Plutus, but of the unimpaired Plutus, hot with youth and still hotter with nectar which by chance he had drunk straight and freely at a party of the gods.

Next, if you want to know the place of my birth (since the place where one first squalled is nowadays considered a mark of nobility), I was born neither in wandering Delos,<sup>6</sup> nor on the foaming sea,<sup>7</sup> nor "in deep caves,"<sup>8</sup> but in the Fortunate Isles<sup>9</sup> themselves, where

1. legendary drug causing oblivion.

2. seat of a particularly awesome oracle.

3. god of wealth and abundance. In Aristophanes' play by that name, to which Erasmus refers later in the paragraph, he is shown in decrepit age; ordinarily he is represented as a boy with a cornucopia.

4. Greek didactic poet of the eighth century B.C., cited here because he was author of the *Theogony* (about the generation and genealogy of the gods).

5. Hephaestus (Vulcan).

6. birthplace of Apollo.

7. from which Venus emerged.

8. a Homeric expression.

9. the mythical and remote islands

all things grow "without plowing or planting." There where there is no labor, no old age, and no sickness; where not a daffodil, mallow, onion, bean, or any other ordinary thing is to be seen; but where nose and eyes are equally delighted by moly, panacea, nepenthes, sweet marjoram, ambrosia, lotus, rose, violet, hyacinth, and the gardens of Adonis. Being born amidst these pleasant things, I did not begin life crying, but from the first laughed good-naturedly at my mother. I certainly need not envy Jove for being suckled by a she-goat, for I was nursed at the breasts of two charming nymphs—Drunkenness, offspring of Bacchus, and Ignorance, daughter of Pan. Both of them you see here with my other attendants and followers. If you ask the names of the others, I must answer in Greek. The haughty one over there is Philantia (Self-love). The one with laughing eyes who is clapping her hands is Kolakia (Flattery). This drowsy one is Lethe (Forgetfulness). She leaning on her elbows with folded hands is Misoponia (Laziness). She with the perfume and wreath of roses is Hedone (Pleasure.) This wild-eyed one is Anoaia (Madness). The smooth-skinned and shapely one is Tryphe (Sensuality). And you see those two gods playing with the girls; well, one is Comus (Intemperance) and the other is Negretos Hypnos (Sound Sleep). With the help of these faithful servants I gain control of all things, even dictating to dictators.

## II. *The Powers and Pleasures of Folly*

. . . Now, that it may not seem that I call myself a goddess without good cause, let me tell you of the range of my influence and of my benefits to men and gods. If to be a god is simply to aid men, as someone has wisely said, and if they have been deservedly deified who have shown mankind the uses of wine or grain, why am I not justly called the Alpha<sup>10</sup> of gods, I who have all alone given all things to all men.

First, what is more dear and precious than life itself? And by whose aid but mine is life conceived? It is not the spear of "potently-sired" Pallas nor the shield of "cloud-controlling" Jove that propagates and multiplies mankind. Even the father of gods and the king of men, he who shakes Olympus with a nod, must lay aside the three-pronged thunderer and that Titanic manner with which when he pleases he terrifies the gods, and like a poor actor assume another character, if he wishes to do what he is forever doing, namely, begetting children. The Stoics<sup>11</sup> assert that they are almost god-like.

where, according to a Greek tradition, some favorites of the gods dwelt in immortality and bliss.

10. first letter of the Greek alphabet; hence, "beginning," "origin."

11. Stoicism originated in the Stoa Poikile ("painted porch"), a building

in the market place in Athens where the philosopher Zeno lectured in the fourth century B.C., and later was perhaps the main type of philosophy of the Roman elite. It became known during the Renaissance especially through Seneca. Erasmus here makes the Stoics the butts

But give me one who is three, four, or six hundred times a Stoic, and if on this occasion he does not remove his beard, the sign of wisdom (in common with goats), at least he will shed his gravity, stop frowning, abandon his rock-bound principles and for a while be a silly fool. In short, the wise man must send for me if he wants to be a father. But why not speak to you more openly, as I usually do? I ask whether the head, the face, the breast, the hand, or the ear—each an honorable part—creates gods and men? I think not, but instead the job is done by that foolish, even ridiculous part which cannot be named without laughter. This is the sacred fountain from which all things rise, more certainly than from the Pythagorean tetrad.<sup>12</sup>

What man, I ask you, would stick his head into the halter of marriage if, following the practice of the wise, he first weighed the inconveniences of that life? Or what woman would ever embrace her husband if she foresaw or considered the dangers of childbirth and the drudgery of motherhood? Now since you owe your life to the marriage-bed, and marriage itself to my follower Madness, you can see how completely indebted you are to me. Moreover, would a woman who had experienced that travail once ever repeat it without the influence of my Forgetfulness? And Venus herself, no matter what Lucretius says,<sup>13</sup> cannot deny that her work would be weak and inconclusive without my help. Hence from my ridiculous and crazy game are produced supercilious philosophers, their present-day successors, vulgarly called monks, kings in purple robes, pious priests, thrice-holy popes, and finally all the gods invented by the poets, so numerous that spacious Olympus is crowded.

That the conception of life is due to me is a small matter when I can show you that I am responsible for everything agreeable. Would life without pleasure be life at all? You applaud! I was sure that you were not so wise, or rather so foolish—no, so wise, as to think otherwise. As a matter of fact, even the Stoics do not really dislike pleasure; they carefully pretend to and they loudly denounce it in public, but only in order to deter others and thus have it all to themselves. Just let them explain to me what part of life is not sad, troublesome, graceless, flat, and distressing without a dash of pleasure, or in other words, folly. This is very adequately proved by Sophocles,<sup>14</sup> a person insufficiently appreciated, who has left this pretty eulogy of me: "Ignorance is bliss." . . .

of Folly's irony on account of their supposedly godlike disregard of the passions.

12. According to the numerical conception of the universe of Pythagoras (sixth century B.C.) and his followers, the first four numbers (the "tetrad"—one, two, three, and four, adding up to

the ideal number, ten) signified the root of all being.

13. In the opening lines of his poem *On the Nature of Things*, Lucretius (99?-55 B.C.) invokes Venus because "all living things" are conceived through her.

14. See his *Ajax*, ll. 554-555:

If someone should unmask the actors in the middle of a scene on the stage and show their real faces to the audience, would he not spoil the whole play? And would not everyone think he deserved to be driven out of the theater with brickbats as a crazy man? For at once a new order of things would suddenly arise. He who played the woman is now seen to be a man; the juvenile is revealed to be old; he who a little before was a king is suddenly a slave; and he who was a god now appears as a little man. Truly, to destroy the illusion is to upset the whole play. The masks and costumes are precisely what hold the eyes of the spectators. Now what else is our whole life but a kind of stage play through which men pass in various disguises, each one going on to play his part until he is led off by the director? And often the same actor is ordered back in a different costume, so that he who played the king in purple, now acts the slave in rags. Thus everything is pretense; yet this play is performed in no other way.

What if some wise man, dropped from heaven, should suddenly confront me at this point and exclaim that the person whom everyone has looked up to as a god and ruler is not even a man, because he is led sheeplike by his passions; that he is the meanest slave because he voluntarily serves so many and such foul masters? Or what if this wise man should instruct someone mourning his parent's death to laugh, on the grounds that the parent had at last really begun to live—our life here being in one way nothing but a kind of death? And what if he should entitle another who was glorying in ancestry, ignoble and illegitimate, because he was so far from virtue, the only source of nobility? And what if he should speak of all others in the same way? What, I ask, would he gain by it except to be regarded as dangerously insane by everyone? Just as nothing is more foolish than unseasonable wisdom, so nothing is more imprudent than bull-headed prudence. And he is indeed perverse who does not accommodate himself to the way of the world, who will not follow the crowd, who does not at least remember the rule of good fellowship, drink or begone, and who demands that the play shall no longer be a play. True prudence, on the contrary, consists in not desiring more wisdom than is proper to mortals, and in being willing to wink at the doings of the crowd or to go along with it sociably. But that, they say, is folly itself. I shall certainly not deny it; yet they must in turn admit that it is also to act the play of life.

I hesitate to speak about the next point. But why should I be silent about what is truer than truth? For so great an undertaking, however, it would probably be wise to call the Muses from Helicon;<sup>15</sup> the poets usually invoke them on the slightest pretext. Therefore,

"... life is sweetest before the feelings  
are awake—until one learns to know  
joy and pain."

15. mythical mountain, home of the  
Muses.

stand by for a moment, daughters of Jove, while I show that one cannot acquire that widely advertised wisdom, which the wise call the secret of happiness, unless one follows the leadership of Folly. First, everyone admits that all the emotions belong to folly. Indeed a fool and a wise man are distinguished by the fact that emotions control the former, and reason the latter. Now the Stoics would purge the wise man of all strong emotions, as if they were diseases; yet these emotions serve not only as a guide and teacher to those who are hastening toward the portal of wisdom, but also as a stimulus in all virtuous actions, as exhorters to good deeds. Of course that superstoic, Seneca, strongly denies this and strips the wise of absolutely every emotion; yet in so doing he leaves something that is not a man at all, but rather a new kind of god or sub-god who never existed and never will. To put it bluntly, he makes a marble imitation of a man, stupid, and altogether alien to every human feeling.

If this is the way they want it, let them keep their wise man. They can love him without any rivals and live with him in Plato's republic or, if they prefer, in the realm of Ideas, or in the gardens of Tantalus.<sup>16</sup> Who would not shudder at such a man and flee from him as from a ghost? He would be insensible to every natural feeling, no more moved by love or pity than if he were solid flint or Marpesian<sup>17</sup> stone. Nothing escapes him; he never makes a mistake; like another Lynceus<sup>18</sup> he sees all; he evaluates everything rigidly; he excuses nothing; he alone is satisfied with himself as the only one who is really rich, sane, royal, free—in short, unique in everything, but only so in his own opinion. Desiring no friend, he is himself the friend of none. He does not hesitate to bid the gods go hang themselves. All that life holds he condemns and scorns as folly. And this animal is the perfect wise man. I ask you, if it were put to a vote, what city would choose such a person as mayor? What army would want such a general? What woman such a husband? What host such a guest? What servant such a master? Who would not rather have any man at all from the rank and file of fools? Now such a choice, being a fool, would be able to command or obey fools. He would be able to please those like himself—or nearly everyone; he would be kind to his wife, a jolly friend, a gay companion, a polished guest; finally, he would consider nothing human to be alien to him.<sup>19</sup> But this wise man has been boring me for some time; let us turn to other instructive topics.

16. Plato's republic, his celestial realm of pure ideas, and the mythical garden of Tantalus in Hades (where rich fruit always evades Tantalus' grasp) are all mentioned because they are characterized by the presence of abstractions and figments.

17. from Marpessos, a mountain on

the island of Paros famous for its marble.

18. a mythical figure whose eyesight was proverbially supposed to penetrate even solid objects.

19. from a proverbial phrase in Terence's *Self-Tormentor*, I. 77: "I am a man; nothing human do I consider alien to me."

Imagine, then, that a man should look down from a great height, as the poets say that Jove does. What calamities would he see in man's life. How miserable, how vile, man's birth. How laborious his education. His childhood is subject to injuries; his youth is painful; his age a burden; his death a hard necessity. He is attacked by a host of diseases, threatened by accidents, and assaulted by misfortunes; there is nothing without some gall. There are also the multitude of evils that man does to man. Here are poverty, imprisonment, infamy, shame, tortures, plots, treachery, slander, law-suits fraud. But this is plainly to count the grains of sand. It is not proper for me at the moment to suggest for what offenses men have deserved these misfortunes, nor what angry god caused them to be born to such miseries. Yet will not anyone who considers these things approve the example of the Milesian virgins,<sup>20</sup> pitiable as it is? Recall, however, what kind of people have committed suicide because they were tired of life. Have they not been the wise or near-wise? Among them, besides Diogenes, Xenocrates, Cato, Cassius, and Brutus, there was Chiron,<sup>21</sup> who chose death rather than immortality. Now you begin to see, I believe, what would happen if all men became wise: there would be need for new clay and another potter like Prometheus.<sup>22</sup>

But by a timely mixture of ignorance, thoughtlessness, forgetfulness of evil, hope of good, and a dash of delight, I bring relief from troubles; so that men are unwilling to relinquish their lives even when their lives are ready to relinquish them. They are so far from being weary of existence, that the less reason they have for living, the more they enjoy life. Clearly it is because of my good work that you everywhere see old fellows of Nestor's<sup>23</sup> age, scarcely recognizable as members of the human race, babbling, silly, toothless, white-haired, bald—or better let me describe them in the words of Aristophanes: "dirty, stooped, wrinkled, bald, toothless, and toolless."<sup>24</sup> And yet they are so in love with life and so eager to be young that one of them dyes his white hair, another hides his baldness with a wig, another obtains false teeth from heaven knowns where, another is infatuated with some young girl and is a sillier lover than any adolescent. Nowadays for one of these old sticks, these drybones, to marry a juicy young wife, and one without a dowry and sure to be enjoyed by others, is becoming the usual and proper thing. But it is even more entertaining to observe the old women, long since half-dead with age, so cadaverous that they seem to have returned from

20. of the city of Miletus, in Asia Minor. There is an ancient tale that most of them, seemingly gone insane, hanged themselves.

21. the centaur (half man, half horse); incurably wounded and suffering great pain, he asked Zeus for

relief from his own immortality.

22. He supposedly molded man out of clay.

23. the old, eloquent sage in the Homeric epic.

24. See Aristophanes, *Plutus*, ll. 266–267.



the grave; yet always saying, "It's good to be alive." They, too, are always in heat, and hire young men at a handsome fee. They carefully paint their faces, and constantly inspect themselves in the mirror; they pluck out hairs from the strangest places; they display their withered and flabby breasts; with a quavering love-song they stir a worn-out desire; they drink and go around with girls; they write love-letters. Everyone laughs at all this, and very properly, since it is the greatest folly in the world; yet the old ladies are well pleased with themselves. They are perfectly happy solely because of me. Moreover, those who scorn this kind of behavior might consider whether it is not better to lead a life of pleasant folly than to look for a rafter and a rope. Anyway, it is nothing to my fools that their actions are scorned; they either feel no shame, or shrug it off easily. If a rock falls on your head, that is clearly painful; but shame, disgrace, and curses hurt only so far as they are felt. What isn't noticed isn't troublesome. So long as you applaud yourself, what harm are the hisses of the world? And folly is the only key to this happiness.

I seem to hear the philosophers disagreeing. This is really unhappiness, they say, this life of folly, error, and ignorance. No, indeed; this is to be human. I cannot see why they should call this unhappiness when it is the common lot of all to **be** thus born, brought up, and constituted. Nothing can be unhappy if it expresses its true nature. Or do you argue that man is to **be** pitied because he cannot fly with the birds, and cannot run on **four** legs with the animals, and is not armed with horns like a bull? It can be argued equally well that the finest horse is unhappy **because** it is not a grammarian and a gourmet, or that a bull is miserable **because** it is found wanting at the minuet. A foolish man is no more unhappy than an illiterate horse: both are true to themselves.

The casuists argue next that men are naturally imperfect, and support and strengthen themselves by the peculiarly human device of study. As if it were possible that nature should be so careful in making a midge, a flower, or an herb, and then should have dozed in making man! And with the result that the sciences are needed! They were really invented by Theuth,<sup>25</sup> the evil genius of the human race, for the hurt of mankind. Instead of promoting man's happiness, they hinder it. They were probably even discovered for that purpose, just as letters were, according to the admirable argument of Plato's wise king.<sup>26</sup> In this way, studies crept in with the other trials of life, and from the same devilish source. This is shown by their name: "daemons," which means "those who know."

25. in Plato's *Phaedrus*, the name of an Egyptian god who brought the art of writing to King Thamus.

26. King Thamus argued that the invention of writing would produce only false wisdom and destroy the power of man's memory.

The people of the golden age lived without the advantages of learning, being guided by instinct and nature alone. What was the need of grammar when all spoke the same language, and spoke only to be understood? What use for dialectic when there was no conflict of opinion? What place for rhetoric when no one wished to get the better of another? What need for legal skill before the time of those evil acts which called forth our good laws? Furthermore, they were then too religious to pry impiously into nature's secrets, to measure the size, motion, and influence of the stars, or to seek the hidden causes of things. They considered it a sacrilege for man to know more than he should. They were free from the insane desire to discover what may lie beyond the stars. But as men fell slowly from the innocence of the golden age, the arts were invented, and by evil spirits, as I have said. At first they were few in number and were accepted by a few people. Later, hundreds more were added by the superstition of the Chaldeans and by the idle speculation of the Greeks. This was a needless vexation of the spirit, when one considers that a single grammatical system is perfectly adequate for a lifetime of torture.

Of course the arts which are nearest to common sense, that is, to folly, are most highly esteemed. Theologians are starved, scientists are given the cold shoulder, astrologers are laughed at, and logicians are ignored. The doctor alone, as they say, is worth all the rest put together. And a doctor is honored, especially among nobles, to the degree that he is ignorant and impudent. Medicine, as now generally practiced, is a branch of the art of flattery just as much as rhetoric is. Lawyers rank next to doctors. Perhaps they should be placed first, but I hesitate to join the philosophers, who unanimously laugh at lawyers as being so many asses. Nevertheless, all affairs, both great and small, are arbitrated by these asses. Their lands increase; while the theologian, who has mastered a trunkful of manuscripts, lives on beans, and wages a gallant war against lice and fleas. As those arts are more successful which have the greatest proportion of folly, so those people are happiest who have nothing to do with learning and follow nature as their only guide. She is in no way wanting, except as a man wishes to go beyond what is proper for him. Nature hates counterfeits; the less the art, the greater the happiness.

Isn't it true that the happiest creatures are those which are least artificial and most natural? What could be happier than the bees, or more wonderful? They lack some of the senses, but what architect has equalled their constructive skill, or what philosopher has framed a republic to match theirs? Now the horse, who does have some of the human senses and who travels around with men, suffers also from human ills. He feels ashamed if he loses a race. While seeking

military glory, he is run through and bites the dust along with his rider. Think, too, of the hard bit, the sharp spurs, the prison-like stable, the whips, sticks, and straps, the rider himself—in short, all the tragedy of servitude to which he exposes himself when he imitates men of honor and zealously seeks vengeance against the enemy. How much more desirable except for the interference of men, is the lot of flies and birds, who live for the moment and by the light of nature. Everyone has noticed how a bird loses its natural beauty when it is shut up in a cage and taught to speak. In every sphere, what is natural is happier than what is falsified by art.

For these reasons I can never sufficiently praise that cock (really Pythagoras)<sup>27</sup> who had been all things—philosopher, man, woman, king, subject, fish, horse, frog, perhaps even a sponge—and who concluded that none is as miserable as man. All the others are content with their natural limitations; man alone is vainly ambitious. Among men, furthermore, the fools are in many respects superior to the learned and the great. Gryllus,<sup>28</sup> for example, proved to be considerably wiser than wise Ulysses when he chose to grunt in a sty rather than to expose himself to the dangers of a further odyssey. Homer, the father of fiction, seems to agree with this: he often observes that men are wretched, and he still oftener describes Ulysses, the pattern of wisdom, as miserable, but he never speaks in this way of Paris, Ajax, or Achilles. Obviously Ulysses was unhappy because that tricky and artful fellow never did anything without consulting the goddess of wisdom. Wouldn't you say that he was over-educated, and that he had got too far away from nature? The seekers after wisdom are the farthest from happiness. They are fools twice over: forgetting the human station to which they were born, they grasp at divinity, and imitating the Giants,<sup>29</sup> they use their arts as engines with which to attack nature. It follows that the least unhappy are those who approximate the naivete of the beasts and who never attempt what is beyond men.

There is no need to argue this like a Stoic logician, however, when we can prove it with a plain example. Is anyone happier than those we commonly call morons, fools, nitwits, and naturals—the most beautiful of names? This may sound absurd at first, but it is profoundly true. In the first place, these fools are free from the fear of death—and that fear is not an insignificant evil. They are free from the pangs of conscience. They are not terrified by ghosts and hobgoblins. They are not filled with vain worries and hopes. In

27. In the dialogue *The Dream, or the Cock*, written in the second century A.D. by the Greek satirist Lucian, the cock upholds the Pythagorean notion of transmigration of souls from one body to another by claiming that he is Pythagoras.

28. character in a dialogue by Plutarch, changed into a pig by Circe.

29. following the example of the Giants, or Titans, of Greek mythology who, inspired by their wronged mother Gaea (Earth), fought the Olympian gods and were defeated.

short, they are not troubled by the thousand cares to which this life is subject. Shame, fear, ambition, envy, and love are not for them. If they were just a little dumber and more animal-like, they would not even sin—or so the theologians say. Count your cares, you stupid intellectuals, and then you will begin to appreciate what I do for my followers. Remember also that they are always merry; wherever they go they bring pleasure, as if they were mercifully created by the gods to lighten the sadness of human life.

In a world where men are mostly at odds, all are as one in their attitude toward these innocents. They are sought out and sheltered; everyone permits them to do and say what they wish with impunity. Even the wild beasts perceive their harmlessness and do not attack them. They are sacred to the gods, and especially to me; therefore do all men properly honor them. Kings cannot eat or travel or spend an hour without their fools, in whom they take the greatest delight.<sup>30</sup> In fact they rather prefer them to their crabbed counsellors, whom they nevertheless support for the sake of appearances. This royal preference is easily explained, I think. Counsellors, confident in their wisdom and forced to speak the unpleasant truth, bring only problems to princes; but fools bring what rulers are always looking for—jokes and laughter.

Fools have another not insignificant virtue: they alone are candid and truthful. What is more admirable than truth? I know that Alcibiades<sup>31</sup> thought that only drunkards and children speak the truth; nevertheless, the merit is really mine, as is proved by a line from Euripides: A fool speaks folly.<sup>32</sup> Whatever a fool has in his heart is all over his face and in his speech. Now wise men have two tongues, as Euripides also remarks,<sup>33</sup> one for speaking the truth, and the other for saying whatever is expedient at the moment. They turn black into white, and blow hot and cold with the same breath; their words are far from what is in their hearts. Kings are unhappiest at this point it seems to me, since in the midst of their prosperity they can find no one to tell them the truth, and are obliged to have flatterers for friends. You may say that kings hate to hear the truth and avoid wise counsellors for fear that one more daring than the others will speak what is true rather than what is pleasant. By and large this is so. It is remarkable, therefore, that kings will take the truth, and a sharp truth too, from my fools. A statement which would cost a wise man his head is received from a fool with the greatest delight. Truth that is free from offensiveness does give genuine pleasure, and only fools have the power to speak it. It is for these reasons, too, that fools are taken up by women, who are

30. The fool, or professional jester, was of course a common feature at Medieval and Renaissance courts.

31. See Plato's *Symposium*.

32. *The Bacchanals (Bacchae)*, l. 369.

33. The source of this reference is uncertain.

naturally inclined to pleasure and frivolity. Moreover, they can explain away whatever games they indulge in with fools, even when the sport becomes serious, as good clean fun—for the sex is ingenious, especially at covering up its own lapses.

Now let's return to the subject of the happiness of fools. After a life of jollity, and with no fear of death, or sense of it, they go straight to the Elysian fields, where they entertain the pious and leisurely shades. Compare the life of a wise man with that of a fool. Put up against a fool some model of wisdom, one who lost his boyhood and youth in the classroom, who dissipated the best part of his life in continual worry and study, and who never tasted a particle of pleasure thereafter. He is always abstemious, poor, unhappy, and crabbed; he is harsh and unjust to himself, grim and mean to others; he is pale, emaciated, sickly, sore-eyed, prematurely old and white-haired, dying before his time. Of course it really makes little difference when such a man dies. He has never lived. Well, there is your wise man for you.

Here the Stoics croak at me again. Nothing, they say, is more lamentable than madness, and pure folly is either very near madness, or more likely is the same thing. What is madness but a wandering of the wits? (But the Stoics wander the whole way.) With the Muses' help we will explode this line of reasoning. The argument is plausible, but our opponents should remember the practice of Socrates in splitting Cupids and Venuses,<sup>34</sup> and distinguish one kind of madness from another—at least they should if they wish to be considered sane themselves. To begin with, not every kind of madness is a calamity. Otherwise Horace would not have said, "A pleasant madness inspires me."<sup>35</sup> Nor would Plato have ranked the frenzy of poets, prophets, and lovers among the chief blessings of life. And the oracle would not have called the labors of Aeneas, insane.<sup>36</sup> Madness is really of two kinds. The first is sent up from hell by the vengeful Furies. Unloosing their snaky locks, they assault the hearts of men with hot desire for war, with insatiable greed and shameful lust, with parricide, incest, sacrilege, or any other evil of that sort. At other times the Furies pursue the guilty and conscience-stricken soul with terror and the fire of wrath. The second kind of madness is far different from this. It comes from me and is to be desired above all things. It arises whenever a cheerful confusion of the mind frees the spirit from care and at the same time anoints it with many-sided delight. It is the state of mind that Cicero desired as a defense against the evils of his age. The Greek in Horace<sup>37</sup> also had the right idea. He was just sufficiently mad to

34. distinguishing different types of love.

35. Horace, *Odes*, Book III, Ode iv, ll. 5-6.

36. *Aeneid*, Book VI, l. 135.

37. What follows is a paraphrase of a passage in Horace's *Epistles*, Book II, Epistle ii, ll. 128-140.

sit alone in the theater all day, laughing and applauding at a bare stage, because he thought that tragedies were being enacted there. Otherwise he was sane enough—pleasant with his friends, kind to his wife, and indulgent to his servants, who could uncork a bottle without his getting angry. When the care of family and physician had freed him of his disease, he protested that he had been killed rather than cured, that they had taken away his pleasures and destroyed his delightful delusions. And he was perfectly right. They were the mad ones themselves, and needed the medicine more than he did. What sense is there in regarding a fortunate delusion like his as a disease to be purged with drugs?

It is not certain that every delusion and vagary ought to be called madness. A short-sighted man who thinks a mule is an ass is not commonly considered insane, nor is one who judges popular music to be great poetry. However, we must grant that a man is pretty nearly mad if he is continually and extraordinarily deluded by both his senses and his judgment. Take, for example, a person who thinks he is listening to a symphony orchestra whenever an ass brays, or a beggar who believes himself to be Croesus. Nevertheless, when this extreme madness gives pleasure, as it usually does, it is remarkably delightful both to those who are possessed by it, and to those who look on and are not mad in exactly the same way. Indeed this kind of madness is much more common than the ordinary person realizes. One madman laughs at another; they take turns entertaining each other. And the maddest one gets the biggest laugh.

If Folly is any judge, the happiest man is the one who is the most thoroughly deluded. May he maintain that ecstasy. It comes only from me, and is so widespread that I doubt if there is one man anywhere who is consistently wise and untouched by some madness. It may be only a tendency to think a gourd is a woman; but since very few see eye to eye with him on this, he will be called mad. When a man foolishly maintains that his wife (whom he shares with many others) is a pluperfect Penelope, however, nobody calls him mad, because they see that this is a plight common to other husbands.

To this latter class belong those who sacrifice everything for hunting. They swear that the sound of the horn and the baying of the hounds fill them with indescribable joy. I understand that even the dung of the dogs smells like cinnamon to them. And what is so delightful as an animal being butchered? Bulls and oxen are of course slaughtered by commoners, but it is a crime for anyone except a gentleman to touch wild game. Bareheaded and kneeling, he performs the ceremony with a special knife (no other can be

used), cutting certain parts in approved order. The silent company stands as if spellbound by some novelty, although it has seen the spectacle a thousand times. If one of them is given a piece to taste, he feels that he has risen somewhat in the ranks of nobility. They think they are living royally, whereas they are really gaining nothing from this butchering and eating of animals, except to degenerate into animals themselves.

A similar class is those who are afire with a tremendous enthusiasm for building. They change round structures into square ones, and then back into round ones again. There is no end to this, until, having built themselves into poverty, they have no house to live in, and nothing to eat. What of it? In the meantime, they have been happy.

Next to these, I believe, are those who with new and secret arts labor to transmute the forms of things and who ransack earth and sea for a fifth essence.<sup>38</sup> Lured on by hope, and begrudging neither pain nor cost, they contrive, with marvelous ingenuity, their own delightful deception. Finally, they have spent all their money and can't afford another furnace. Even then, however, they dream on pleasantly, urging others to experience the same happiness. When absolutely all hope is gone, they find much comfort in this last thought, "In great things, it is enough to have tried." They complain that life is too short for the magnitude of their undertaking.

I am not sure that gamblers should be admitted to our fellowship, and yet some of these addicts are a foolish and ridiculous sight. At the sound of the dice their hearts beat faster. The hope of winning always lures them on, until their means are gone, until their ship is split on the gaming table, which is a more deadly promontory than Malea.<sup>39</sup> Now, when they have lost their shirt, they will cheat anyone except the winner, in order to preserve their word and honor. Think, also, of the old and half-blind fellows, who have to wear glasses to play. When well-earned gout has tied their joints in knots, they hire a proxy to put the dice in the box for them. A delightful affair, were it not that the game usually degenerates into a brawl, and so belongs to the Furies rather than to me.

A group that does belong with us beyond any doubt is made up of those who enjoy telling and hearing monstrous lies and tall tales. They never get enough of ghosts and goblins and the like. They are most pleased by stories that are farthest from the truth. Such wonders are a diversion from boredom, and they may also be very profitable, especially for priests and pardoners.

Closely related are those who have reached the foolish but com-

38. a substance (in addition to the four traditional elements—earth, water, air, and fire) of which the heavenly

bodies were believed to be composed.

39. a proverbially dangerous promontory in Greece.

forting belief that if they gaze on a picture of Polyphemus-Christopher,<sup>40</sup> they will not die that day; or that whoever speaks the right words to an image of Barbara<sup>41</sup> will return unharmed from battle; or that a novena<sup>42</sup> to Erasmus, with proper prayers and candles, will shortly make one rich. In St. George they have turned up another Hercules or Hippolytus.<sup>43</sup> They all but adore his horse, which is piously studded and ornamented, and they ingratiate themselves by small gifts. To swear by St. George's brass helmets is an oath for a king. Then, what shall I say of those who happily delude themselves with forged pardons for their sins? They calculate the time to be spent in Purgatory down to the year, month, day, and hour, as if from a fool-proof mathematical table. There are also those who propose to get everything they desire by relying on magical charms and prayers devised by some pious impostor for the sake of his soul, or for profit. They will have wealth, honor, pleasure, plenty, good health, long life, a vigorous old age, and at last, a place next to Christ in heaven. However they don't want that seat of honor until the very last minute; celestial pleasures may come only when worldly pleasures, hung on to with tooth and nail, finally depart.

I picture a business man, a soldier, or a judge taking from all his loot one small coin as a proper expiation for the infinite evil of his life. He thinks it possible to buy up, like notes, so many perjuries, rapes, debauches, fights, murders, frauds, lies and treacheries. Having done this, he feels free to start with a clean slate on a new round of sin. How foolish also—and how happy—are those who expect something more than the highest happiness if they repeat daily the seven verses of the Psalms. These are the verses believed to have been pointed out to St. Bernard by the devil. He was a merry fellow but not very shrewd, since his tongue was loosened by the saint's trick.<sup>44</sup> Things like that are so foolish that I am almost ashamed of them myself; yet they are accepted not only by the laity but by the professors of theology themselves. The same thing on a larger scale occurs when sections of the country set up regional saints, and assign peculiar rites and powers to each one. One gives relief from toothache, another aids women in labor, a third recovers stolen goods, a fourth succors the shipwrecked, and still another watches over the sheep—the list is too long to finish. Some are helpful in a number of difficulties, especially the Virgin Mother, whom the common people honor more than they do the Son.

40. Polyphemus is the Cyclops (one-eyed giant) in Homer's *Odyssey*; St. Christopher is also represented with only one eye.

41. St. Barbara, supposed to protect her worshipers against fire and artillery.

42. a nine days' devotion.

43. In Greco-Roman mythology, both fought against monsters.

44. A devil had told St. Bernard that repeating seven particular verses of the Psalms would bring him the certainty of salvation; "the saint's trick" was that of proposing to recite all of the Psalms.



Do men ask anything but folly from these saints? Among all the gifts hanging from the walls and even from the ceilings of churches, have you ever seen one in payment for an escape from folly, or for making the giver wiser? One person has escaped from drowning. Another has lived after being run through. This fellow had the good luck or the nerve to leave the battlefield, allowing the others to fight. Another was delivered from the shadow of the gallows by the patron saint of thieves so that he could continue to relieve those who are burdened with too much wealth. This one escaped from jail. That one crossed up his doctor by surviving a fever. This man was saved by a poisoned drink, which loosened his bowels instead of killing him. His wife was not exactly pleased, since she lost both her labor and expense. Another's wagon was overturned, but he drove his horses home unharmed. That fellow's house fell on him and he lived. This one sneaked out safely when he was surprised by a husband. No one, however, gives thanks for warding off folly. It is so pleasant not to be wise that men will seek to avoid anything rather than folly.

Why should I go farther on this sea of superstition? "If I had a hundred tongues, a hundred mouths, a voice of brass, I could not describe all the forms of folly, or list all its names."<sup>45</sup> The life of Christians everywhere runs over with such nonsense. Superstitions are allowed and even promoted by the priests; they do not regret anything so profitable. Imagine, in the midst of this, some insolent wise men speaking the real truth: "You will not die badly if you live well. Your sins are redeemed if to the payment of money you add tears, vigils, prayers, fastings, and hatred of evil, and if you change your whole way of living. The saints will favor you if you imitate them." A wise man who snarled out things like that would throw the world into turmoil and deprive it of happiness!

Also of our fellowship are those who while still living make elaborate funeral arrangements, even prescribing the number of candles, mourners, singers, and hired pall-bearers. They must think that their sight will be returned to them after they are dead, or that their corpses will feel ashamed at not being buried grandly. They labor as if they were planning a civic entertainment.

I must not pass over those nobodies who take enormous pride in empty titles of nobility. One will trace his family back to Aeneas, another to Brutus,<sup>46</sup> and a third to King Arthur. They are surrounded by busts and portraits of their ancestors. They name over their grandfathers and great-grandfathers, and have the old titles by heart. At the same time, they are not far from being senseless statues themselves, and are probably worth less than the ones they

45. a variation on a passage in the *Aeneid*, Book VI, ll. 625-627, in which, however, Virgil is talking of "forms of

crime" rather than of "folly."

46. the legendary founder of Britain.

show off. My follower, Self-love, enables them to live happily, however; and there are always other fools who regard monsters like these as gods.

Of course Self-love brings joy to others too. This ape-like fellow here seems handsome enough to himself. That one drawing circles over there thinks he is another Euclid. The man with the rooster's voice considers himself a great musician. The happiest fool, however, is the dolt who glories in some talent which is really made possible by his followers. Seneca tells<sup>47</sup> of that doubly-happy rich man, for example, who had servants on hand to refresh his memory whenever he told stories. He was so weak he could hardly stand, but he was a great fighter—with the support of hired thugs.

Artists are notoriously conceited. They would rather lose the family homestead than any part of their talent. This is especially true of actors, singers, orators, and poets. The worse they are, the more insolent, pushing, and conceited they become. And the more applause they receive. The worst always please the most, because the majority of people, as I have remarked, are fools. If the poorer artist is most pleased with himself and is admired by the largest number, why should he wish to have true skill? It will cost him more; it will make him self-conscious and critical; and it will please far fewer of his audience.

I observe that races and cities are also attended by self-love. The English pride themselves on their good looks, their music, and their fine food, among other things. Noble or royal lineage is the claim of all Scots, together with argumentative skill. The French are the masters of courtesy; and the Parisians,<sup>48</sup> in addition, are the only ones who understand theology. The Italians have a monopoly on literature and eloquence, and they are pleased to admit that they alone are not barbarians. Happiest in this delusion are the Romans, who dream pleasantly of their ancient glories.<sup>49</sup> The Venetians are content with their own nobility. The Greeks, of course, discovered the arts and possess the heroes of antiquity. Christian superstitions entertain the Turks and the other actual barbarians, who boast of their own religions. Better yet, the Jews steadfastly await the Messiah, and still hold grimly to Moses. The Spaniards scorn all other soldiers; and the Germans pride themselves on their great size and their knowledge of magic. I believe this is sufficient to convince you that the happiness of men, individually and collectively, springs from self-love.

Another source of pleasure is flattery, an extension of self-love.

47. The reference has not been traced.

48. The Sorbonne, the theological faculty in Paris, was the center of theological studies in Europe. See our

first selection from Rabelais.

49. In connection with this passage see the closing paragraphs of Machiavelli's *Prince* (reprinted in this volume).

Instead of admiring yourself, you simply admire someone else. Nowadays flattery is condemned, but only among those who confuse the names of things with the things themselves. They think that flattery is necessarily insincere. The example of dumb animals should show them how wrong they are. What is more fawning than a dog? And yet, what is more faithful and a better friend to man? Or perhaps you prefer fierce lions, tigers, and leopards? Of course there is a harmful kind of flattery, the kind with which traitors and mockers destroy their victims; but my kind springs from kindness and candor. It is much closer to virtue than is its opposite, surliness—or what Horace calls a heavy and awkward rudeness.<sup>50</sup> It raises the spirits and dispels grief; it stimulates the faint, enlivens the dull, and eases the suffering; it brings lovers together and keeps them together. It entices boys to study literature; it inspires the old. Disguised as praise, it warns and instructs princes without offense. In short, it makes everyone more pleased with himself—which is the chief part of happiness. What is more courteous than the way two mules scratch each other? There is no need to point out that flattery is important in the admired art of oratory, that it is a great part of medicine, and that it is a still greater part of poetry. It is nothing less than the sugar and spice of all human intercourse.

Still, it is a sad thing, they say, to be deceived. No; the saddest thing is not to be deceived. The notion that happiness comes from a knowledge of things as they really are is wrong. Happiness resides in opinion. Human affairs are so obscure and various that nothing can be clearly known. This was the sound conclusion of the Academics,<sup>51</sup> who were the least surly of the philosophers. At least if something can be truly known, it is rarely anything that adds to the pleasure of life. Anyway, man's mind is much more taken with appearances than with reality. This can be easily and surely tested by going to church. When anything serious is being said, the congregation dozes or squirms. But if the ranter—I mean the reverend—begins some old wives' tale, as often happens, everyone wakes up and strains to hear. You will also see more devotion being paid to such fabulous and poetic saints as George, Christopher, or Barbara than to Peter or Paul or even to Christ Himself. But these examples belong elsewhere.

The price of this kind of happiness is very low. Much more must be paid for substantial things, even for the least of them—grammar, for instance. It is easy enough to acquire mere opinions; nevertheless they bring greater happiness than knowledge does. The satisfaction of a man who thinks rotten kippers taste and smell like am-

50. Horace, *Epistles*, Book I, Epistle xviii, ll. 508.

51. philosophers of Plato's school, the Academy, which later became a school of skeptics.

brosia is not affected by the fact that his neighbor cannot abide their odor. On the other hand, if the finest fish turn your stomach, their quality has no bearing on your happiness. A man who thinks his extremely ugly wife is another Venus is as well off as if she really were beautiful. Here's a person who gazes admiringly at a picture made of red lead and mud which he believes is by Apelles or Zeuxis. Isn't he happier than someone who has paid a high price for an authentic masterpiece, but who gets little pleasure from it? I know a man by my name,<sup>52</sup> a practical joker, who gave his new wife some imitation jewels and persuaded her that they were genuine and very valuable. Now what difference did it make to the girl? She was delighted with the glass trinkets and kept them locked in a secret place. In the meantime, the husband had saved money, had enjoyed fooling his wife, and had won her devotion as well as he would have by a more expensive present.

What difference do you see between the self-satisfied inhabitants of Plato's cave<sup>53</sup> who contentedly admire the shadows of things, and the wise man who emerges from the cave and sees reality? If Lucian's Micyllus<sup>54</sup> could have dreamed forever his rich and golden dream, there would have been no reason for him to desire any other kind of happiness. Evidently, then, there is either no difference between a fool and a wise man, or if there is a difference, a fool has the better of it. A fool's happiness costs least—no more than a bit of illusion. In addition, it is enjoyed in the company of a great many others. The good things of life must be shared to be delightful; and who has not heard of the scarcity of wise men, if indeed any exist at all. The Greeks listed seven all told;<sup>55</sup> a more accurate census would do well to turn up one-half or one-third of a wise man.

Of course drink will drown your sorrows, but only for a time. The next morning they come galloping back, riding four white horses, as the saying is. Folly, on the other hand, is a spree that never ends. Its effect is complete and immediate. Without requiring any bothersome preparations, it fills the heart with joy. It is available to all, rather than to a chosen few, as with other gifts of the gods. Vintage wine is not made everywhere; beauty comes to few, and eloquence to fewer still. Not many are rich, and not many can be kings. Mars often favors neither side; Neptune drowns more than he saves. The majority are turned away from wisdom. Jove himself thunders, and the anti-Joves—Pluto, Ate, Poena, Febris,<sup>56</sup> and the

52. Sir Thomas More, who was a close friend of Erasmus', and on whose name Erasmus puns with *moria* (Latin for "folly").

53. The reference is to Plato's allegory in the *Republic*, Book VII, where he compares the soul in the body to a prisoner chained in a cave, his back against the light, able to see

only the shadows of things outside.

54. a character in Lucian's *The Dream, or the Cock* who dreams that he has taken the place of a rich man.

55. The Seven Sages listed were philosophers of the sixth century B.C., among them Thales and Solon.

56. Pluto was god of the underworld; *Ate*, goddess of revenge and dis-

others—are executioners rather than gods. Only I, great-hearted Folly, embrace all men equally. Nor do I come only when prayed for. If some devotion is neglected, I don't grow testy and demand expiation. I don't upset heaven and earth if I have been left at home and not invited along with the other gods to smell the sacrifices. In fact, the other gods are so hard to please that it is safer and wiser not to try to worship them, but rather to avoid them altogether. Men are sometimes like that; so thin-skinned and irritable that hands off is the best policy.

Even though all this is so, I understand that no one sacrifices to Folly or builds a temple for her. Such ingratitude, I repeat, is amazing. At the same time, I good-naturedly persuade myself that respect is not really lacking. What need have I for incense, meal, a he-goat, or a she-hog, so long as men everywhere whole-heartedly worship me in the way that preachers tell us is best? Let Diana have her human sacrifices! I am not envious when I consider that all men honor me in the truest way, that is, by taking me to their hearts and manifesting me in their lives and actions. This kind of worship of the saints is not exactly customary among Christians. Plenty of them burn little candles to the Virgin, and in the middle of the day, when it does no good; but how few of them burn with zeal to imitate her in chastity, temperance, and love of heavenly things! That, after all, is the true worship, and it is by far the most pleasing to those above. Besides, why should I desire a temple, when the whole world, if I am not mistaken, is a handsome shrine to me? Nor are priests lacking—except where men are lacking. As for stone and painted images, I am not so foolish as to demand what stands in the way of worship. The stupid adore such substitutes in place of the saints themselves, who are finally crowded out altogether. The same thing would happen to me. One might say, of course, that there are as many statues to me as there are people who look foolish, even unintentionally so. What do I care if other gods are worshipped in certain places on stated days—Phoebus at Rhodes, Venus at Cyprus, Juno at Argos, Minerva at Athens, Jupiter at Olympus, Neptune at Tarentum, Priapus<sup>57</sup> at Lampsacus? Why should I envy them when all men eagerly offer greater sacrifices to me?

[The third section deals with “The Followers of Folly,” and includes among them, in lively and paradoxical descriptions, all categories of people, from merchants to poets, from scholars to popes and cardinals; in fact, Folly concludes: “My real point has been that no man can live happily unless he has been admitted into my mysteries and enjoys my favor.”]

cord; *Poena*, goddess of punishment; *Febris*, goddess of fever.

57. a god of procreation, son of Dionysus and Aphrodite.

IV. *The Christian Fool*

. . . There is really no need for me to marshal proof<sup>58</sup> with so much care, when in the mystical psalms Christ himself, speaking to the Father, says perfectly plainly, "Thou knowest my foolishness."<sup>59</sup> It is not hard to see why fools are greatly pleasing to God. We know that great princes look with suspicion on men who are too clever, and hate them. Julius Caesar, for instance, suspected and hated Brutus and Cassius, while he did not fear the drunken Antony at all. Nero, likewise, was suspicious of Seneca, and Dionysius<sup>60</sup> of Plato; but all princes take pleasure in duller and simpler souls. In the same way, Christ always hates and condemns those who rely on their own wisdom. Paul testifies to this clearly enough when he says, "God has chosen the foolish things of the world,"<sup>61</sup> and when he says, "It has pleased God to save the world by foolishness,"<sup>62</sup> since it could never be redeemed by wisdom. God himself indicates this plainly when he proclaims through the mouth of the prophet, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and I will reject the prudence of the prudent."<sup>63</sup> Christ also gave thanks that God had concealed the mystery of salvation from the wise, but had revealed it to babes, that is, to fools.<sup>64</sup> The Greek for "babes" is *νηπιους*, which is the opposite of *σοφοις*, "the wise." Equally pertinent is the fact that in the Gospels Christ often attacks the scribes and Pharisees and doctors of laws, whereas he faithfully defends the ignorant multitude. What is "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees,"<sup>65</sup> except "Woe unto you that are wise"? Little children, women, and fishermen seem to delight Him most. Even among animals, those pleased Christ best which had the least slyness. He preferred to ride upon a donkey, though had He chosen He could safely have ridden upon a lion. The Holy Spirit descended in the likeness of a dove, not of an eagle or a hawk; and the Gospels frequently mention harts, fawns, and lambs. Those who are chosen for eternal life are called "sheep." No animal is more foolish, as is shown by the proverbial phrase in Aristotle, "sheepish character," which was suggested by the stupidity of the animal and is com-

58. of the relationship between "Folly" and Christianity.

59. The quotation is from Psalm 69:5, where the speaker is not Christ, but the Psalmist.

60. Dionysius the Younger, tyrant of Syracuse, in Sicily, in the fourth century B.C.

61. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." (I Corinthians 1:27.)

62. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not

God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

63. ". . . for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

64. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." (Matthew 11:25.)

65. Luke 11:44.

monly used as a taunt against dull and foolish men. Nevertheless, Christ declares himself the shepherd of his flock, and even takes delight in the name of "the Lamb," as when John pointed Him out, "Behold the Lamb of God."<sup>66</sup> The expression also appears frequently in the book of *Revelations*.

What do these things declare except that all men, even the pious, are fools? And that Christ himself, although He possessed the wisdom of the Father,<sup>67</sup> became something like a fool in order to cure the folly of mankind, when He assumed the nature and being of a mortal? And that He was made "to be sin"<sup>68</sup> in order to redeem sinners? He did not wish to redeem them by any way except by the foolishness of the Cross,<sup>69</sup> and by weak and simple apostles. These He taught to practice folly and to avoid wisdom. He incited them by the example of children, lilies, mustard-seed, and sparrows,<sup>70</sup> all of them foolish things, living without art or care, by the light of nature alone. Furthermore, He forbade the apostles to be concerned about how they should answer the charges of the magistrates, and He forbade them to pry into the times and seasons. They should not rely on their own wisdom, but should wholly depend upon Him. We know, likewise, that the Creator commanded men not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, just as if knowledge were the destroyer of happiness. Paul roundly condemns knowledge as that which puffs up<sup>71</sup> and works harm. St. Bernard is following him, I believe, when he explains that the mountain wherein Lucifer established his headquarters was "the Mount of Knowledge."

Surely we should not overlook this argument, that folly is so pleasing to the heavenly powers that forgiveness of its errors is certain; whereas nothing is forgiven to wisdom. And so it comes about that when the prudent pray to be forgiven, although they were clever enough when they sinned, they use the excuse and defense of having acted foolishly. This was the argument that Aaron used in the book of *Numbers*, if I remember correctly, to excuse his sister from punishment: "I beseech, my master, that you lay not this sin, which we have committed foolishly, to our charge."<sup>72</sup> Saul asked forgiveness of David by saying, "It is apparent that I have done foolishly."<sup>73</sup> David, in turn, speaks placatingly to the Lord:

66. John 1:29, 36.

67. "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (I Corinthians 1:24.)

68. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." (II Corinthians 5:21.)

69. The source of this allusion is uncertain.

70. For the reference to *children*, see Luke 18:17; for *lilies*, see Matthew

6:28; for *mustard-seed*, see Luke 17:6; for *sparrows*, see Matthew 10:29.

71. "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." (I Corinthians 8:1.)

72. "And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned." (Numbers 12:11.)

73. "... behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly." (I Samuel 26:21.)

"I beseech Thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly."<sup>74</sup> It is as if he could not obtain grace by praying unless he pleaded folly and ignorance. Much stronger proof is the fact that Christ when he prayed on the Cross for His enemies, "Father, forgive them," pleaded no other excuse than ignorance, saying, "for they know not what they do."<sup>75</sup> In the same manner, Paul wrote to Timothy: "But therefore I have obtained the mercy of the Lord, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief."<sup>76</sup> What is "I acted ignorantly" except "I acted foolishly, not maliciously"? What is "But therefore I have obtained the mercy of the Lord" except "I should not have obtained it if I had not been supported by the excuse of folly"? The mystical psalmist, whom I failed to recall at the proper place, aids us: "Remember not the sins of my youth and my ignorances."<sup>77</sup>

Let me stop pursuing the infinite and try to summarize. The Christian religion on the whole seems to have some kinship with folly, while it has none at all with wisdom. If you want proof of this, observe first that children, old people, women, and fools take more delight than anyone else in holy and religious things; and that they are therefore ever nearest the altars, led no doubt solely by instinct. Next, you will notice that the founders of religion have prized simplicity exceedingly, and have been the bitterest foci of learning. Finally, no people seem to act more foolishly than those who have been truly possessed with Christian piety. They give away whatever is theirs; they overlook injuries, allow themselves to be cheated, make no distinction between friends and enemies, shun pleasure, and feast on hunger, vigils, tears, labors, and scorn. They disdain life, and utterly prefer death; in short, they seem to have become altogether indifferent to ordinary interests, quite as if their souls lived elsewhere and not in their bodies. What is this, if not to be mad? Considering this, we should not find it very strange that the apostles appeared to be drunk on new wine, and that Paul, in the eyes of Festus,<sup>78</sup> his judge, looked as if he had gone mad.

. . . Since the pious and the vulgar are so radically different, it comes about that each appears to the other to be mad. It is obvious to me, however, that the word is more correctly applied to the pious rather than to the others. This will become clearer if I briefly demonstrate, as I promised to do, that their *summum bonum* is nothing but a kind of insanity. First, let us assume that Plato was dreaming of approximately the same thing when he wrote that "the

74. I Chronicles 21:8.

75. Luke 23:34.

76. ". . . but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." (I Timothy 1:13.)

77. "Remember not the sins of my

youth, nor my transgressions." (Psalms 25:7.)

78. a Roman official. ". . . Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." (Acts 26:24.)



madness of lovers is the highest kind of happiness.”<sup>79</sup> He who loves intensely no longer lives in himself but in whatever he loves, and the more he can leave himself and enter into the other, the happier he is. Now when a soul is eager to leave the body, and does not use its bodily organs normally, you call it madness and rightly so. Isn’t this what is meant by the common sayings: “there’s nobody home,” and “to come to,” and “he is himself again”? Furthermore, as the love becomes more nearly complete, the madness is greater and more delightful. What is that heavenly life, then, towards which the truly religious aspire with such devotion? Very certainly the stronger and victorious spirit will absorb the body, and it will do this the more easily because now it is in its own realm, and also because during life it has cleansed and contracted the body in preparation for this change. Then the soul will itself be marvellously absorbed by that supreme spirit, which is greater than its infinite parts. And so at last the whole man will be outside of himself; nor will he be happy for any other reason than that, being outside of himself, he shall have some ineffable portion of that supreme good which draws all things unto itself. Although this happiness becomes complete only when the soul has recovered its original body by being clothed with immortality; yet since the life of pious folk is a contemplation and a shadowing forth of that other life, they feel a glow and a foretaste of the reward to come. This is *only* a drop, of course, in comparison with the fountain of eternal happiness, but it far surpasses all physical pleasures, even all mortal delights rolled into one. By so much does the spiritual exceed the bodily, the invisible exceed the visible. This surely is what the prophet has promised: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”<sup>80</sup> And this is that portion of folly which will not be taken away by the transformation of life, but will be perfected.

Those who are permitted to have a foretaste of this—and it comes to very few—experience something very like madness. They say things that are not quite coherent or conventional, sounds without meaning, and their expressions change suddenly. They are exuberant and melancholy, crying, laughing, and sighing by turns; in brief, they are truly beside themselves. When presently they return to themselves, they say that they do not know where they have been, whether in the body or out of it, waking or sleeping. They do not remember what they have heard, seen, said, or done; and yet mistily as in a dream, they know that they were happiest when they were out of their minds. So they are sorry to come to themselves again, and they desire nothing more than to be mad always with this kind

79. See Plato, *Phaedrus*.

80. I Corinthians 2:9.

of madness. And this is only the slightest taste of the happiness hereafter.

But indeed I have long since forgotten who I am and have run out of bounds. If anything I have said seems sharp or gossipy, remember that it is Folly and a woman who has spoken. At the same time remember the Greek proverb, "Even a foolish man will often speak a word in season." Or perhaps you think that does not hold for women? I see that you are expecting a peroration, but you are certainly foolish if you think that I can remember any part of such a hodgepodge of words as I have poured out. There is an old saying, "I hate a drinking companion with a memory." Here is a new one, "I hate an audience that remembers anything."

And so farewell. Applaud, live, drink, most distinguished worshippers of Folly.

## BALDESAR CASTIGLIONE

(1478-1529)

### The Book of the Courtier (*Il libro del cortegiano*)\*

[*The Setting*]†

On the slopes of the Apennines towards the Adriatic sea, almost in the centre of Italy, there lies (as everyone knows) the little city of Urbino. Although amid mountains, and less pleasing ones than perhaps some others that we see in many places, it has yet enjoyed such favour of heaven that the country round about is very fertile and rich in crops; so that besides the wholesomeness of the air, there is great abundance of everything needful for human life. But among the greatest blessings that can be attributed to it, this I believe to be the chief, that for a long time it has ever been ruled by the best of lords; although in the calamities of the universal wars of Italy, it was for a season<sup>1</sup> deprived of them. But without seeking further, we can give good proof of this by the glorious memory of Duke Federico,<sup>2</sup> who in his day was the light of Italy; nor is there lack of credible and abundant witnesses, who are still living, to his prudence, humanity, justice, liberality, unconquered courage,—and to his military discipline, which is conspicuously attested by his numerous victories, his capture of impregnable places, the sudden

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† Book I, Chapters 2-4.

1. for a certain period of time, until Duke Guidobaldo, described below, had to relinquish the duchy of Urbino to Cesare Borgia, who occupied it by force.

2. Federico II (1422-1482), of the house of Montefeltro, duke of Urbino.

swiftness of his expeditions, the frequency with which he put to flight large and formidable armies by means of a very small force, and by his loss of no single battle whatever; so that we may not unreasonably compare him to many famous men of old.

Among his other praiseworthy deeds, he built on the rugged site of Urbino a palace regarded by many as the most beautiful to be found in all Italy; and he so well furnished it with everything suitable that it seemed not a palace but a city in the form of a palace; and not merely with what is ordinarily used,—such as silver vases, hangings of richest cloth-of-gold and silk, and other similar things,—but for ornament he added countless antique statues in marble and bronze, pictures most choice, and musical instruments of every sort, nor would he admit anything there that was not very rare and excellent. Then at very great cost he collected a goodly number of most excellent and rare books in Greek, Latin and Hebrew, all of which he adorned with gold and with silver, esteeming this to be the chiefest excellence of his great palace.

Following then the course of nature, and already sixty-five<sup>3</sup> years old, he died gloriously, as he had lived; and he left as his successor a motherless little boy of ten years, his only son Guidobaldo. Heir to the State, he seemed to be heir also to all his father's virtues, and soon his noble nature gave such promise as seemed not permissible to hope for from mortal man; so that men esteemed none among the notable deeds of Duke Federico to be greater than to have begotten such a son. But envious of so much virtue, fortune thwarted this glorious beginning with all her power; so that before Duke Guido reached the age of twenty years, he fell ill of the gout, which grew upon him with grievous pain, and in a short space of time so crippled all his members that he could neither stand upon his feet nor move; and thus one of the fairest and most promising forms in the world was distorted and spoiled in tender youth.

And not content even with this, fortune was so contrary to him in all his purposes, that he could seldom carry into effect anything that he desired; and although he was very wise of counsel and unconquered in spirit, it seemed that what he undertook, both in war and in everything else whether small or great, always ended ill for him. And proof of this is found in his many and diverse calamities, which he ever bore with such strength of mind, that his spirit was never vanquished by fortune; nay, scorning her assaults with unbroken courage, he lived in illness as if in health and in adversity as if fortunate, with perfect dignity and universal esteem; so that although he was thus infirm in body, he fought with most honourable rank<sup>4</sup> in the service of their Serene Highnesses the Kings of Naples,

3. actually only sixty.

4. as a mercenary captain or *condottiere*.

Alfonso and Ferdinand the Younger;<sup>5</sup> later with Pope Alexander VI,<sup>6</sup> and with the Venetian and Florentine signories.

Upon the accession of Julius II<sup>7</sup> to the pontificate, he was made Captain of the Church;<sup>8</sup> at which time, following his accustomed habit, above all else he took care to fill his household with very noble and valiant gentlemen, with whom he lived most familiarly, delighting in their intercourse: wherein the pleasure he gave to others was not less than that he received from others, he being well versed in both the [learned] languages, and uniting affability and pleasantness to a knowledge of things without number. And besides this, the greatness of his spirit so set him on, that although he could not practise in person the exercises of chivalry, as he once had done, yet he took the utmost pleasure in witnessing them in others; and by his words, now correcting now praising every man according to desert, he clearly showed his judgment in those matters; wherefore, in jousts and tournaments, in riding, in the handling of every sort of weapon, as well as in pastimes, games, music,—in short, in all the exercises proper to noble cavaliers,—everyone strove so to show himself, as to merit being deemed worthy of such noble fellowship.

Thus all the hours of the day were assigned to honourable and pleasant exercises as well for the body as for the mind; but since my lord Duke was always wont by reason of his infirmity to retire to sleep very early after supper, everyone usually betook himself at that hour to the presence of my lady Duchess, Elisabetta Gonzaga;<sup>9</sup> where also was ever to be found my lady Emilia Pia,<sup>10</sup> who was endowed with such lively wit and judgment that, as you know, it seemed as if she were the Mistress of us all, and as if everyone gained wisdom and worth from her. Here then, gentle discussions and innocent pleasantries were heard, and on the face of everyone a jocund gaiety was seen depicted, so that the house could truly be called the very abode of mirth: nor ever elsewhere, I think, was so relished, as once was here, how great sweetness may flow from dear and cherished companionship; for not to speak of the honour it was to each of us to serve such a lord as he of whom I have just spoken, there was born in the hearts of all a supreme contentment every time we came into the presence of my lady Duchess; and it seemed as if this were a chain that held us all linked in love, so that

5. Alfonso II and Ferdinand II (both of the house of Aragon), kings of Naples in the late fifteenth century.

6. Rodrigo Borgia, pope from 1492 to 1503.

7. in 1503; for further information about Pope Alexander VI (mentioned above) and Pope Julius II, see in our Machiavelli selection "Princely Virtues" footnote 2, the corresponding text, and the other passages in Machiavelli men-

tioned in the note.

8. captain in the pontiff's army.

9. Of the ruling family of Mantua, she had married Duke Guidobaldo in 1488. She is the one who presides over this courtly scene.

10. Sister-in-law and companion of the duchess, widow of an illegitimate son of the old duke, Federico, she wittily directs much of the conversation.

never was concord of will or cordial love between brothers greater than that which here was between us all.

The same was it among the ladies, with whom there was intercourse most free and honourable; for everyone was permitted to talk, sit, jest and laugh with whom he pleased; but such was the reverence paid to the wish of my lady Duchess, that this same liberty was a very great check; nor was there anyone who did not esteem it the utmost pleasure he could have in the world, to please her, and the utmost pain to displease her. And thus, most decorous manners were here joined with greatest liberty, and games and laughter in her presence were seasoned not only with witty jests, but with gracious and sober dignity; for that modesty and loftiness which governed all the acts, words and gestures of my lady Duchess, bantering and laughing, were such that she would have been known for a lady of noblest rank by anyone who saw her even but once. And impressing herself thus upon those about her, she seemed to attune us all to her own quality and tone; accordingly every man strove to follow this pattern, taking as it were a rule of beautiful behaviour from the presence of so great and virtuous a lady; whose highest qualities I do not now purpose to recount, they not being my theme and being well known to all the world, and far more because I could not express them with either tongue or pen; and those that perhaps might have been somewhat hid, fortune, as if wondering at such rare virtue, chose to reveal through many adversities and stings of calamity, so as to give proof that in the tender breast of woman, in company with singular beauty, there may abide prudence and strength of soul, and all those virtues that even among stern men are very rare.

*["Everything He May Do or Say Shall Be  
Stamped with Grace"]\**

"I am of opinion<sup>11</sup> that the principal and true profession of the Courtier ought to be that of arms; which I would have him follow actively above all else, and be known among others as bold and strong, and loyal to whomsoever he serves. And he will win a reputation for these good qualities by exercising them at all times and in all places, since one may never fail in this without severest censure. And just as among women, their fair fame once sullied never recovers its first lustre, so that reputation of a gentleman who bears arms, if once it be in the least tarnished with cowardice or other disgrace, remains forever infamous before the world and

\* From Book I, Chapters 17-26.

11. The conversational "game" through which the courtiers at Urbino are attempting to achieve a description of the perfect courtly gentleman, is in progress. The speaker at this point is

Count Ludovico da Canossa (1476-1532). A relative of the writer and a friend of the painter Raphael, he was later a bishop and held many important offices, such as that of papal ambassador to England.

full of ignominy. Therefore the more our Courtier excels in this art, the more he will be worthy of praise; and yet I do not deem essential in him that perfect knowledge of things and those other qualities that befit a commander; since this would be too wide a sea, let us be content, as we have said, with perfect loyalty and unconquered courage, and that he be always seen to possess them. For the courageous are often recognized even more in small things than in great; and frequently in perils of importance and where there are many spectators, some men are to be found, who, although their hearts be dead within them, yet, moved by shame or by the presence of others, press forward almost with their eyes shut, and do their duty God knows how. While on occasions of little moment, when they think they can avoid putting themselves in danger without being detected, they are glad to keep safe. But those who, even when they do not expect to be observed or seen or recognized by anyone, show their ardour and neglect nothing, however paltry, that may be laid to their charge,—they have that strength of mind which we seek in our Courtier.

"Not that we would have him look so fierce, or go about blustering, or say that he has taken his cuirass to wife, or threaten with those grim scowls that we have often seen in Berto; because to such men as this, one might justly say that which a brave lady jestingly said in gentle company to one whom I will not name at present; who, being invited by her out of compliment to dance, refused not only that, but to listen to the music, and many other entertainments proposed to him,—saying always that such silly trifles were not his business; so that at last the lady said, 'What is your business, then?' He replied with a sour look, 'To fight.' Then the lady at once said, 'Now that you are in no war and out of fighting trim, I should think it were a good thing to have yourself well oiled, and to stow yourself with all your battle harness in a closet until you be needed, lest you grow more rusty than you are'; and so, amid much laughter from the bystanders, she left the discomfited fellow to his silly presumption.

"Therefore let the man we are seeking, be very bold, stern, and always among the first, where the enemy are to be seen; and in every other place, gentle, modest, reserved, above all things avoiding ostentation and that impudent self-praise by which men ever excite hatred and disgust in all who hear them."

Then my lord Gaspar<sup>12</sup> replied:

"As for me, I have known few men excellent in anything whatever, who do not praise themselves; and it seems to me that this may well be permitted them; for when anyone who feels himself

12. Count Gaspar Pallavicino (1486–1511), a very young member of the

court, who died only a few years afterward.

to be of worth, sees that he is not known to the ignorant by his works, he is offended that his worth should lie buried, and needs must in some way hold it up to view, in order that he may not be cheated of the fame that is the true reward of worthy effort. Thus among the ancient authors, whoever carries weight seldom fails to praise himself. They indeed are insufferable who do this without desert, but such we do not presume our Courtier to be."

The Count then said:

"If you heard what I said, it was impudent and indiscriminate self-praise that I censured: and as you say, we surely ought not to form a bad opinion of a brave man who praises himself modestly, nay we ought rather to regard such praise as better evidence than if it came from the mouth of others. I say, however, that he, who in praising himself runs into no error and incurs no annoyance or envy at the hands of those that hear him, is a very discreet man indeed and merits praise from others in addition to that which he bestows upon himself; because it is a very difficult matter."

Then my lord Gaspar said:

"You must teach us that."

The Count replied:

"Among the ancient authors there is no lack of those who have taught it; but to my thinking, the whole art consists in saying things in such a way that they shall not seem to be said to that end, but let fall so naturally that it was impossible not to say them, and while seeming always to avoid self-praise, yet to achieve it; but not after the manner of those boasters, who open their mouths and let the words come forth haphazard. Like one of our friends a few days ago, who, being quite run through the thigh with a spear at Pisa, said he thought it was a fly that had stung him; and another man said he kept no mirror in his room because, when angry, he became so terrible to look at, that the sight of himself would have frightened him too much."

Everyone laughed at this, but messer Cesare Gonzaga<sup>13</sup> added:

"Why do you laugh? Do you not know that Alexander the Great, on hearing the opinion of a philosopher to be that there was an infinite number of worlds, began to weep, and being asked why he wept, replied, 'Because I have not yet conquered one of them;' as if he would fain have vanquished all? Does not this seem to you a greater boast than that about the fly-sting?"

Then the Count said:

"Yes, and Alexander was a greater man than he who made the other speech. But extraordinary men are surely to be pardoned when they assume much; for he who has great things to do must

13. considered by some the "first gentleman" at the court of Urbino. A cousin of the writer, he was a warrior,

a diplomat, and a pastoral poet; he died in 1512, at thirty-seven.

needs have daring to do them, and confidence in himself, and must not be abject or mean in spirit, yet very modest in speech, showing less confidence in himself than he has, lest his self-confidence lead to rashness."

The Count now paused a little, and messer Bernardo Bibbiena<sup>14</sup> said, laughing:

"I remember what you said earlier, that this Courtier of ours must be endowed by nature with beauty of countenance and person, and with a grace that shall make him so agreeable. Grace and beauty of countenance I think I certainly possess, and this is the reason why so many ladies are ardently in love with me, as you know; but I am rather doubtful as to the beauty of my person, especially as regards these legs of mine, which seem to me decidedly less well proportioned than I should wish: as to my bust and other members, however, I am quite content. Pray, now, describe a little more in particular the sort of body that the Courtier is to have, so that I may dismiss this doubt and set my mind at rest."

After some laughter at this, the Count continued:

"Of a certainty that grace of countenance can be truly said to be yours, nor need I cite further example than this to show what manner of thing it is, for we unquestionably perceive your aspect to be most agreeable and pleasing to everyone, albeit the lineaments of it are not very delicate. Still it is of a manly cast and at the same time full of grace; and this characteristic is to be found in many different types of countenance. And of such sort I would have our Courtier's aspect; not so soft and effeminate as is sought by many, who not only curl their hair and pluck their brows, but gloss their faces with all those arts employed by the most wanton and unchaste women in the world; and in their walk, posture and every act, they seem so limp and languid that their limbs are like to fall apart; and they pronounce their words so mournfully that they appear about to expire upon the spot: and the more they find themselves with men of rank, the more they affect such tricks. Since nature has not made them women, as they seem to wish to appear and be, they should be treated not as good women but as public harlots, and driven not merely from the courts of great lords but from the society of honest men.

"Then coming to the bodily frame, I say it is enough if this be neither extremely short nor tall, for both of these conditions excite a certain contemptuous surprise, and men of either sort are gazed upon in much the same way that we gaze on monsters. Yet if we must offend in one of the two extremes, it is preferable to fall a little short of the just measure of height than to exceed it, for

14. Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena and friend of the painter Raphael, and (1470-1520), author of a play performed at the court of Urbino, patron later a cardinal.



besides often being dull of intellect, men thus huge of body are also unfit for every exercise of agility, which thing I should much wish in the Courtier. And so I would have him well built and shapely of limb, and would have him show strength and lightness and suppleness, and know all bodily exercises that befit a man of war: whereof I think the first should be to handle every sort of weapon well on foot and on horse, to understand the advantages of each, and especially to be familiar with those weapons that are ordinarily used among gentlemen; for besides the use of them in war, where such subtlety in contrivance is perhaps not needful, there frequently arise differences between one gentleman and another, which afterwards result in duels often fought with such weapons as happen at the moment to be within reach: thus knowledge of this kind is a very safe thing. Nor am I one of those who say that skill is forgotten in the hour of need; for he whose skill forsakes him at such a time, indeed gives token that he has already lost heart and head through fear.

"Moreover I deem it very important to know how to wrestle, for it is a great help in the use of all kinds of weapons on foot. Then, both for his own sake and for that of his friends, he must understand the quarrels and differences that may arise, and must be quick to seize an advantage, always showing courage and prudence in all things. Nor should he be too ready to fight except when honour demands it; for besides the great danger that the uncertainty of fate entails, he who rushes into such affairs recklessly and without urgent cause, merits the severest censure even though he be successful. But when he finds himself so far engaged that he cannot withdraw without reproach, he ought to be most deliberate, both in the preliminaries to the duel and in the duel itself, and always show readiness and daring. Nor must he act like some, who fritter the affair away in disputes and controversies, and who, having the choice of weapons, select those that neither cut nor pierce, and arm themselves as if they were expecting a cannonade; and thinking it enough not to be defeated, stand ever on the defensive and retreat,—showing therein their utter cowardice. And thus they make themselves a laughing-stock for boys, like those two men of Ancona who fought at Perugia not long since, and made everyone laugh who saw them."

"And who were they?" asked my lord Gaspar Pallavicino.

"Two cousins," replied messer Cesare.

Then the Count said:

"In their fighting they were as like as two brothers"; and soon continued: "Even in time of peace weapons are often used in various exercises, and gentlemen appear in public shows before the people and ladies and great lords. For this reason I would have our

Courtier a perfect horseman in every kind of seat; and besides understanding horses and what pertains to riding, I would have him use all possible care and diligence to lift himself a little beyond the rest in everything, so that he may be ever recognized as eminent above all others. And as we read of Alcibiades that he surpassed all the nations with whom he lived, each in their particular province, so I would have this Courtier of ours excel all others, and each in that which is most their profession. And as it is the especial pride of the Italians to ride well with the rein, to govern wild horses with consummate skill, and to play at tilting and jousting,—in these things let him be among the best of the Italians. In tourneys and in the arts of defence and attack, let him shine among the best in France. In stick-throwing, bull-fighting, and in casting spears and darts, let him excel among the Spaniards. But above everything he should temper all his movements with a certain good judgment and grace, if he wishes to merit that universal favour which is so greatly prized.

“There are also many other exercises, which although not immediately dependent upon arms, yet are closely connected therewith, and greatly foster manly sturdiness; and one of the chief among these seems to me to be the chase, because it bears a certain likeness to war; and truly it is an amusement for great lords and befitting a man at court, and furthermore it is seen to have been much cultivated among the ancients. It is fitting also to know how to swim, to leap, to run, to throw stones, for besides the use that may be made of this in war, a man often has occasion to show what he can do in such matters; whence good esteem is to be won, especially with the multitude, who must be taken into account withal. Another admirable exercise, and one very befitting a man at court, is the game of tennis, in which are well shown the disposition of the body, the quickness and suppleness of every member, and all those qualities that are seen in nearly every other exercise. Nor less highly do I esteem vaulting on horse, which although it be fatiguing and difficult, makes a man very light and dexterous more than any other thing; and besides its utility, if this lightness is accompanied by grace, it is to my thinking a finer show than any of the others.

“Our Courtier having once become more than fairly expert in these exercises, I think he should leave the others on one side: such as turning summersaults, rope-walking, and the like, which savour of the mountebank and little befit a gentleman.

“But since one cannot devote himself to such fatiguing exercises continually, and since repetition becomes very tiresome and abates the admiration felt for what is rare, we must always diversify our life with various occupations. For this reason I would have our

Courtier sometimes descend to quieter and more tranquil exercises, and in order to escape envy and to entertain himself agreeably with everyone, let him do whatever others do, yet never departing from praiseworthy deeds, and governing himself with that good judgment which will keep him from all folly; but let him laugh, jest, banter, frolic and dance, yet in such fashion that he shall always appear genial and discreet, and that everything he may do or say shall be stamped with grace."

Then messer Cesare Gonzaga said:

"We certainly ought on no account to hinder the course of this discussion; but if I were to keep silence, I should be neglected both of the right I have to speak and of my desire to know one thing: and let me be pardoned if I ask a question instead of contradicting; for this I think may be permitted me, after the precedent of messer Bernardo here, who in his over desire to be held comely, broke the rules of our game by asking a question instead of contradicting."<sup>15</sup>

Then my lady Duchess said:

"You see how one error begets many. Therefore he who transgresses and sets a bad example, like messer Bernardo, deserves to be punished not only for his own transgression but also for the others'."

Then messer Cesare replied:

"In that case, my Lady, I shall be exempt from penalty, since messer Bernardo is to be punished for his own fault as well as mine."

"Nay," said my lady Duchess, "you both ought to have double punishment: he for his own transgression and for leading you to transgress; you for your own transgression and for imitating him."

"My Lady," replied messer Cesare, "as yet I have not transgressed; so, to leave all this punishment to messer Bernardo alone, I will keep silence."

And indeed he remained silent; when my lady Emilia laughed and said:

"Say whatever you like, for under leave of my lady Duchess I pardon him that has transgressed and him that shall transgress, in so small a degree."

"I consent," continued my lady Duchess. "But take care lest perchance you fall into the mistake of thinking to gain more by being merciful than by being just; for to pardon him too easily that has transgressed is to wrong him that transgresses not. Yet I would not have my severity reproach your indulgence, and thus be the cause of our not hearing this question of messer Cesare."

15. According to the plan agreed upon at the start, one of the company began a description of the perfect courtier, and the others made their contributions by contradicting the preceding speaker.

And so, being given the signal by my lady Duchess and by my lady Emilia, he at once said:

"If I remember rightly, Sir Count, I think you have repeated several times this evening that the Courtier must accompany his actions, gestures, habits, in short his every movement, with grace; and this you seem to regard as an universal seasoning, without which all other properties and good qualities are of little worth. And indeed I think that in this everyone would allow himself to be persuaded easily, since from the very force of the word, it may be said that he who has grace finds grace. But since you said that this is oftentimes the gift of nature and of heaven and, even when not thus perfect, can with care and pains be made much greater,—those men who are born so fortunate and so rich in this treasure as are some we see, seem to me in this to have little need of other master; because that benign favour of heaven almost in despite of themselves leads them higher than they will, and makes them not only pleasing but admirable to all the world. Therefore I do not discuss this, it not being in our power to acquire it of ourselves. But they who have received from nature only so much, that they are capable of becoming graceful by pains, industry and care,—I long to know by what art, by what training, by what method, they can acquire this grace, as well in bodily exercises (in which you esteem it to be so necessary) as also in everything else that they may do or say. Therefore, since by much praise of this quality you have aroused in all of us, I think, an ardent thirst to pursue it, you are further bound, by the charge that my lady Emilia laid upon you, to satisfy that thirst by teaching us how to attain it."

"I am not bound," said the Count, "to teach you how to become graceful, or anything else; but only to show you what manner of man a perfect Courtier ought to be. Nor would I in any case undertake the task of teaching you this perfection; especially having said a little while ago that the Courtier must know how to wrestle, vault, and do many other things, which I am sure you all know quite as well as if I, who have never learned them, were to teach you. For just as a good soldier knows how to tell the smith what fashion, shape and quality his armour ought to have, but cannot show how it is to be made or forged or tempered; so I perhaps may be able to tell you what manner of man a perfect Courtier ought to be, but cannot teach you what you must do to become one."

"Yet to comply with your request as far as is within my power,—although it is almost a proverb that grace is not to be learned,—I say that whoever would acquire grace in bodily exercises (assuming first that he be by nature not incapable), ought to begin early and learn the rudiments from the best masters. And how important this seemed to King Philip of Macedon, may be seen from the fact

that he chose Aristotle, the famous philosopher and perhaps the greatest that has ever been in the world, to teach his son Alexander the first elements of letters. And of the men whom we know at the present day, consider how well and how gracefully my lord Galeazzo Sanseverino,<sup>16</sup> Grand Equerry of France, performs all bodily exercises; and this because in addition to the natural aptitude of person that he possesses, he has taken the utmost pains to study with good masters, and always to have about him men who excel and to select from each the best of what they know: for just as in wrestling, vaulting and in the use of many sorts of weapons, he has taken for his guide our friend messer Pietro Monte,<sup>17</sup> who (as you know) is the true and only master of every form of trained strength and ability,—so in riding, jousting and all else, he has ever had before his eyes the most proficient men that were known in those matters.

"Therefore he who wishes to be a good pupil, besides performing his tasks well, must put forth every effort to resemble his master, and, if it were possible, to transform himself into his master. And when he feels that he has made some progress, it will be very profitable to observe different men of the same calling, and governing himself with that good judgment which must ever be his guide, to go about selecting now this thing from one and that thing from another. And as the bee in the green meadows is ever wont to rob the flowers among the grass, so our Courtier must steal this grace from all who seem to possess it, taking from each that part which shall most be worthy praise; and not act like a friend of ours whom you all know, who thought he greatly resembled King Ferdinand the Younger of Aragon,<sup>18</sup> and made it his care to imitate the latter in nothing but a certain trick of continually raising the head and twisting one side of the mouth, which the king had contracted from some infirmity. And there are many such, who think they gain a point if only they be like a great man in some thing; and frequently they devote themselves to that which is his only fault.

"But having before now often considered whence this grace springs, laying aside those men who have it by nature, I find one universal rule concerning it, which seems to me worth more in this matter than any other in all things human that are done or said: and that is to avoid affectation to the uttermost and as it were a very sharp and dangerous rock; and, to use possibly a new word,<sup>19</sup>

16. Of a famous Neapolitan family, he fought for Louis XII and Francis I of France, and died at the battle of Pavia (1525).

17. fencing master at the court of Urbino.

18. Ferdinand II, king of Naples from 1495 to 1496.

19. *Sprezzatura*, here translated as "nonchalance," is indeed Castiglione's own word, epitomizing the important concept of gentlemanly behavior discussed in this passage.

to practise in everything a certain nonchalance that shall conceal design and show that what is done and said is done without effort and almost without thought. From this I believe grace is in large measure derived, because everyone knows the difficulty of those things that are rare and well done, and therefore facility in them excites the highest admiration; while on the other hand, to strive and as the saying is to drag by the hair, is extremely ungraceful, and makes us esteem everything slightly, however great it be.

"Accordingly we may affirm that to be true art which does not appear to be art; nor to anything must we give greater care than to conceal art, for if it is discovered, it quite destroys our credit and brings us into small esteem. And I remember having once read that there were several very excellent orators of antiquity, who among their other devices strove to make everyone believe that they had no knowledge of letters; and hiding their knowledge they pretended that their orations were composed very simply and as if springing rather from nature and truth than from study and art; the which, if it had been detected, would have made men wary of being duped by it.

"Thus you see how the exhibition of art and study so intense destroys the grace in everything. Which of you is there who does not laugh when our friend messer Pierpaolo<sup>20</sup> dances in his peculiar way, with those capers of his,—legs stiff to the toe and head motionless, as if he were a stick, and with such intentness that he actually seems to be counting the steps? What eye so blind as not to see in this the ungracefulness of affectation,—and in many men and women who are here present, the grace of that nonchalant ease (for in the case of bodily movements many call it thus), showing by word or laugh or gesture that they have no care and are thinking more of everything else than of that, to make the onlooker think they can hardly go amiss?"

20. an otherwise unidentified character.

## NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

(1469–1527)

["That Food Which Alone Is Mine"]\*

I am living on my farm, and since my last troubles<sup>1</sup> I have not been in Florence twenty days, putting them all together. Up to now

\* From a letter of December 10, 1513, to Francesco Vettori, Florentine Ambassador at Rome. Our text is from *Machiavelli, The Prince and Other Works*, new translation by Allan H. Gilbert, copyright, by Hendricks House

Farrar Straus.

1. Machiavelli had been suspected of participation in a conspiracy led by two young friends of his, and had been imprisoned and subjected to torture before his innocence was recognized.

I have been<sup>\*</sup> setting snares for thrushes with my own hands; I get up before daylight, prepare my birdlime, and go out with a bundle of cages on my back, so that I look like Geta when he came back from the harbor with the books of Amphitryo,<sup>2</sup> and catch at the least two thrushes and at the most six. So I did all of September; then this trifling diversion, despicable and strange as it is, to my regret failed. What my life is now I shall tell you.

In the morning I get up with the sun and go out into a grove that I am having cut; there I remain a couple of hours to look over the work of the past day and kill some time with the woodmen, who always have on hand some dispute either among themselves or among their neighbors. . . .

When I leave the grove, I go to a spring, and from there into my aviary. I have a book in my pocket, either Dante or Petrarch or one of the minor poets, as Tibullus,<sup>3</sup> Ovid, and the like. I read about their tender passions and their loves, remember mine, and take pleasure for a while in thinking about them. Then I go along the road to the inn, talk with those who pass by, ask the news of their villages, learn various things, and note the varied tastes and different fancies of men. It gets to be dinner time, and with my troop I eat what food my poor farm and my little property permit. After dinner, I return to the inn; there I usually find the host, a butcher, a miller, and two furnace-tenders. With these fellows I sink into vulgarity for the rest of the day, playing at *cricca* and *tricche-trach*;<sup>4</sup> from these games come a thousand quarrels and numberless offensive and insulting words; we often dispute over a penny, and all the same are heard shouting as far as San Casciano.<sup>5</sup> So, involved in these trifles, I keep my brain from getting mouldy, and express the perversity of Fate, for I am willing to have her drive me along this path, to see if she will be ashamed of it.

In the evening, I return to my house, and go into my study. At the door I take off the clothes I have worn all day, mud spotted and dirty, and put on regal and courtly garments. Thus appropriately clothed, I enter into the ancient courts of ancient men,<sup>6</sup> where, being lovingly received, I feed on that food which alone is mine, and which I was born for; I am not ashamed to speak with them and to ask the reasons for their actions, and they courteously answer me. For four hours I feel no boredom and forget every worry; I do not fear poverty, and death does not terrify me. I give myself completely over to the ancients. And because Dante says that there

2. allusion to a popular tale in which Amphitryo, returning to Thebes after having studied at Athens, sends forward from the harbor his servant Geta to announce his arrival to his wife Alcmena, and loads him with his books.

3. Albius Tibullus, Roman elegiac poet of the first century B.C.

4. two popular games, the first played with cards, the second with dice thrown to regulate the movements of pawns on a chessboard.

5. nearby village; in the region around Florence.

6. Machiavelli here refers figuratively to his study of ancient history.

is no knowledge unless one retains what one has read,<sup>7</sup> I have written down the profit I have gained from their conversation, and composed a little book *De principatibus*,<sup>8</sup> in which I go as deep as I can into reflections on this subject, debating what a principate is, what the species are, how they are gained, how they are kept, and why they are lost. If ever any of my trifles can please you, this one should not displease you; and to a prince, and especially a new prince, it ought to be welcome.

7. "... for knowledge none can vaunt / Who retains not, although he have understood." (*Paradise*, Canto V, ll. 41-42.)

8. *Of Principedoms*; the Latin title of *The Prince*. All chapter headings are also in Latin in the original.

## The Prince (Il principe)\*

[*Princely Virtues*]<sup>†</sup>

ON THE THINGS FOR WHICH MEN, AND ESPECIALLY PRINCES,  
ARE PRAISED OR CENSURED

... Because I know that many have written on this topic, I fear that when I too write I shall be thought presumptuous, because, in discussing it, I break away completely from the principles laid down by my predecessors. But since it is my purpose to write something useful to an attentive reader, I think it more effective to go back to the practical truth of the subject than to depend on my fancies about it. And many have imagined republics and principalities that never have been seen or known to exist in reality. For there is such a difference between the way men live and the way they ought to live, that anybody who abandons what is for what ought to be will learn something that will ruin rather than preserve him, because anyone who determines to act in all circumstances the part of a good man must come to ruin among so many who are not good. Hence, if a prince wishes to maintain himself, he must learn how to be not good, and to use that ability or not as is required.

Leaving out of account, then, things about an imaginary prince, and considering things that are true, I say that all men, when they are spoken of, and especially princes, because they are set higher, are marked with some of the qualities that bring them either blame or praise. To wit, one man is thought liberal, another stingy (using a Tuscan word, because *avaricious* in our language is still applied to one who desires to get things through violence, but *stingy* we apply to him who refrains too much from using his own property);

\* Written in 1513. Our text is from *Machiavelli, The Prince and Other Works*, new translation by Allan H.

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† From Chapters 15-18.



one is thought open-handed, another grasping; one cruel, the other compassionate; one is a breaker of faith, the other reliable; one is effeminate and cowardly, the other vigorous and spirited; one is philanthropic, the other egotistic; one is lascivious, the other chaste; one is straight-forward, the other crafty; one hard, the other easy to deal with; one is firm, the other unsettled; one is religious, the other unbelieving; and so on.

And I know that everybody will admit that it would be very praiseworthy for a prince to possess all of the above-mentioned qualities that are considered good. But since he is not able to have them or to observe them completely, because human conditions do not allow him to, it is necessary that he be prudent enough to understand how to avoid getting a bad name because he is given to those vices that will deprive him of his position. He should also, if he can, guard himself from those vices that will not take his place away from him, but if he cannot do it, he can with less anxiety let them go. Moreover, he should not be troubled if he gets a bad name because of vices without which it will be difficult for him to preserve his position. I say this because, if everything is considered, it will be seen that some things seem to be virtuous, but if they are put into practice will be ruinous to him; other things seem to be vices, yet if put into practice will bring the prince security and well-being.

#### ON LIBERALITY AND PARSIMONY

Beginning, then, with the first of the above-mentioned qualities, I assert that it is good to be thought liberal.<sup>1</sup> Yet liberality, practiced in such a way that you get a reputation for it, is damaging to you, for the following reasons: If you use it wisely and as it ought to be used, it will not become known, and you will not escape being censured for the opposite vice. Hence, if you wish to have men call you liberal, it is necessary not to omit any sort of lavishness. A prince who does this will always be obliged to use up all his property in lavish actions; he will then, if he wishes to keep the name of liberal, be forced to lay heavy taxes on his people and exact money from them, and do everything he can to raise money. This will begin to make his subjects hate him, and as he grows poor he will be little esteemed by anybody. So it comes about that because of this liberality of his, with which he has damaged a large number and been of advantage to but a few, he is affected by every petty annoyance and is in peril from every slight danger. If he recognizes this and wishes to draw back, he quickly gets a bad name for stinginess.

Since, then, a prince cannot without harming himself practice

1. generous, openhanded.

this virtue of liberality to such an extent that it will be recognized, he will, if he is prudent, not care about being called stingy. As time goes on he will be thought more and more liberal, for the people will see that because of his economy his income is enough for him, that he can defend himself from those who make war against him, and that he can enter upon undertakings without burdening his people. Such a prince is in the end liberal to all those from whom he takes nothing, and they are numerous; he is stingy to those to whom he does not give, and they are few. In our times we have seen big things done only by those who have been looked on as stingy; the others have utterly failed. Pope Julius II,<sup>2</sup> though he made use of a reputation for liberality to attain the papacy, did not then try to maintain it, because he wished to be able to make war. The present King of France<sup>3</sup> has carried on great wars without laying unusually heavy taxes on his people, merely because his long economy has made provision for heavy expenditures. The present King of Spain,<sup>4</sup> if he had continued liberal, would not have carried on or completed so many undertakings.

Therefore a prince ought to care little about getting called stingy, if as a result he does not have to rob his subjects, is able to defend himself, does not become poor and contemptible, and is not obliged to become grasping. For this vice of stinginess is one of those that enables him to rule. Somebody may say: Caesar, by means of his liberality became emperor, and many others have come to high positions because they have been liberal and have been thought so. I answer: Either you are already prince, or you are on the way to become one. In the first case liberality is dangerous; in the second it is very necessary to be thought liberal. Caesar was one of those who wished to attain dominion over Rome. But if, when he had attained it, he had lived for a long time and had not moderated his expenses, he would have destroyed his authority. Somebody may answer: Many who have been thought very liberal have been princes and done great things with their armies. I answer: The prince spends either his own property and that of his subjects or that of others. In the first case he ought to be frugal; in the second he ought to abstain from no sort of liberality. When he marches with his army and lives on plunder, loot, and ransom, a prince controls the property of others. To him liberality is essential, for without it his soldiers would not follow him. You can be a free giver of what does not belong to you or your subjects, as were Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander, because to spend the money of others does

2. Giuliano della Rovere, elected to the papacy in 1503 at the death of Pius III, who had been successor to Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia). Alexander VI is discussed in the chapter "In What Way Faith Should Be Kept by

Princes"; for Machiavelli's view of the character of Julius II, see the chapter "The Power of Fortune in Human Affairs . . ."

3. Louis XII.

4. Ferdinand II, "the Catholic."

not decrease your reputation but adds to it. It is only the spending of your own money that hurts you.

There is nothing that eats itself up as fast as does liberality, for when you practice it you lose the power to practice it, and become poor and contemptible, or else to escape poverty you become rapacious and therefore are hated. And of all the things against which a prince must guard himself, the first is being an object of contempt and hatred. Liberality leads you to both of these. Hence there is more wisdom in keeping a name for stinginess, which produces a bad reputation without hatred, than in striving for the name of liberal, only to be forced to get the name of rapacious, which brings forth both bad reputation and hatred.

ON CRUELTY AND PITY, AND WHETHER IT IS BETTER TO BE  
LOVED OR TO BE FEARED, AND VICE VERSA

Coming then to the other qualities already mentioned, I say that every prince should wish to be thought compassionate and not cruel; still, he should be careful not to make a bad use of the pity he feels. Cesare Borgia<sup>5</sup> was considered cruel, yet this cruelty of his pacified the Romagna, united it, and changed its condition to that of peace and loyalty. If the matter is well considered, it will be seen that Cesare was much more compassionate than the people of Florence, for in order to escape the name of cruel they allowed Pistoia to be destroyed.<sup>6</sup> Hence a prince ought not to be troubled by the stigma of cruelty, acquired in keeping his subjects united and faithful. By giving a very few examples of cruelty he can be more truly compassionate than those who through too much compassion allow disturbances to continue, from which arise murders or acts of plunder. Lawless acts are injurious to a large group, but the executions ordered by the prince injure a single person. The new prince, above all other princes, cannot possibly avoid the name of cruel, because new states are full of perils. Dido in Vergil puts it thus: "Hard circumstances and the newness of my realm force me to do such things, and to keep watch and ward over all my lands."<sup>7</sup>

All the same, he should be slow in believing and acting, and should make no one afraid of him, his procedure should be so tempered with prudence and humanity that too much confidence does not make him incautious, and too much suspicion does not make him unbearable.

All this gives rise to a question for debate: Is it better to be loved than to be feared, or the reverse? I answer that a prince should

5. son of Pope Alexander VI, and duke of Valentinois and Romagna. His skillful and merciless subjugation of the local lords of Romagna occurred during the years between 1499 and 1502.

6. by internal dissensions because the Florentines, Machiavelli contends, failed to treat the leaders of the dissenting parties with an iron hand.

7. *Aeneid*, Book I, ll. 563-564.

wish for both. But because it is difficult to reconcile them, I hold that it is much more secure to be feared than to be loved, if one of them must be given up. The reason for my answer is that one must say of men generally that they are ungrateful, mutable, pretenders and dissemblers, prone to avoid danger, thirsty for gain. So long as you benefit them they are all yours; as I said above, they offer you their blood, their property, their lives, their children, when the need for such things is remote. But when need comes upon you, they turn around. So if a prince has relied wholly on their words, and is lacking in other preparations, he falls. For friendships that are gained with money, and not with greatness and nobility of spirit, are deserved but not possessed, and in the nick of time one cannot avail himself of them. Men hesitate less to injure a man who makes himself loved than to injure one who makes himself feared, for their love is held by a chain of obligation, which, because of men's wickedness, is broken on every occasion for the sake of selfish profit; but their fear is secured by a dread of punishment which never fails you.

Nevertheless the prince should make himself feared in such a way that, if he does not win love, he escapes hatred. This is possible, for to be feared and not to be hated can easily coexist. In fact it is always possible, if the ruler abstains from the property of his citizens and subjects, and from their women. And if, as sometimes happens, he finds that he must inflict the penalty of death, he should do it when he has proper justification and evident reason. But above all he must refrain from taking property, for men forget the death of a father more quickly than the loss of their patrimony. Further, causes for taking property are never lacking, and he who begins to live on plunder is always finding cause to seize what belongs to others. But on the contrary, reasons for taking life are rare and fail sooner.

But when a prince is with his army and has a great number of soldiers under his command, then above all he must pay no heed to being called cruel, because if he does not have that name he cannot keep his army united or ready for duty. It should be numbered among the wonderful feats of Hannibal that he led to war in foreign lands a large army, made up of countless types of men, yet never suffered from dissension, either among the soldiers of against the general, in either bad or good fortune. His success resulted from nothing else than his inhuman cruelty, which, when added to his numerous other strong qualities, made him respected and terrible in the sight of his soldiers. Yet without his cruelty his other qualities would not have been adequate. So it seems that those writers have not thought very deeply who on one side admire

his accomplishment and on the other condemn the chief cause for it.

The truth that his other qualities alone would not have been adequate may be learned from Scipio,<sup>8</sup> a man of the most unusual powers not only in his own times but in all ages we know of. When he was in Spain his armies mutinied. This resulted from nothing other than his compassion, which had allowed his soldiers more license than befits military discipline. This fault was censured before the Senate by Fabius Maximus, and Scipio was called by him the corruptor of the Roman soldiery. The Locrians<sup>9</sup> were destroyed by a lieutenant of Scipio's, yet he did not avenge them or punish the disobedience of that lieutenant. This all came from his easy nature, which was so well understood that one who wished to excuse him in the Senate said there were many men who knew better how not to err than how to punish errors. This easy nature would in time have overthrown the fame and glory of Scipio if, in spite of this weakness, he had kept on in independent command. But since he was under the orders of the Senate, this bad quality was not merely concealed but was a glory to him.

Returning, then, to the debate on being loved and feared, I conclude that since men love as they please and fear as the prince pleases, a wise prince will evidently rely on what is in his own power and not on what is in the power of another. As I have said, he need only take pains to avoid hatred.

#### IN WHAT WAY FAITH SHOULD BE KEPT BY PRINCES

Everybody knows how laudable it is in a prince to keep this faith and to be an honest man and not a trickster. Nevertheless, the experience of our times shows that the princes who have done great things are the ones who have taken little account of their promises and who have known how to addle the brains of men with craft. In the end they have conquered those who have put their reliance on good faith.

You must realize, then, that there are two ways to fight. In one kind the laws are used, in the other, force. The first is suitable to man, the second to animals. But because the first often falls short, one has to turn to the second. Hence a prince must know perfectly how to act like a beast and like a man. This truth was covertly taught to princes by ancient authors, who write that Achilles and many other ancient princes were turned over for their up-bringing to Chiron the centaur,<sup>10</sup> that he might keep them under his tuition.

8. Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus the Elder (235-183 B.C.). The episode of the mutiny occurred in 206 B.C.

9. citizens of Locri, in Sicily.

10. reputed in myth to be the educator of many heroes, among them Achilles, Theseus, Jason, and Hercules.

To have as teacher one who is half beast and half man means nothing else than that a prince needs to know how to use the qualities of both creatures. The one without the other will not last long.

Since, then, it is necessary for a prince to understand how to make good use of the conduct of the animals, he should select among them the fox and the lion, because the lion cannot protect himself from traps, and the fox cannot protect himself from the wolves. So the prince needs to be a fox that he may know how to deal with traps, and a lion that he may frighten the wolves. Those who act like the lion alone do not understand their business. A prudent ruler, therefore, cannot and should not observe faith when such observance is to his disadvantage and the causes that made him give his promise have vanished. If men were all good, this advice would not be good, but since men are wicked and do not keep their promises to you, you likewise do not have to keep yours to them. Lawful reasons to excuse his failure to keep them will never be lacking to a prince. It would be possible to give innumerable modern examples of this and to show many treaties and promises that have been made null and void by the faithlessness of princes. And the prince who has best known how to act as a fox has come out best. But one who has this capacity must understand how to keep it covered, and be a skilful pretender and dissembler. Men are so simple and so subject to present needs that he who deceives in this way will always find those who will let themselves be deceived.

I do not wish to keep still about one of the recent instances. Alexander VI<sup>11</sup> did nothing else than deceive men, and had no other intention; yet he always found a subject to work on. There never was a man more effective in swearing that things were true, and the greater the oaths with which he made a promise, the less he observed it. Nonetheless his deceptions always succeeded to his wish, because he thoroughly understood this aspect of the world.

It is not necessary, then, for a prince really to have all the virtues mentioned above, but it is very necessary to seem to have them. I will even venture to say that they damage a prince who possesses them and always observes them, but if he seems to have them they are useful. I mean that he should seem compassionate, trustworthy, humane, honest, and religious, and actually be so; but yet he should have his mind so trained that, when it is necessary not to practice these virtues, he can change to the opposite, and do it skilfully. It is to be understood that a prince, especially a new prince, cannot observe all the things because of which men are considered good, because he is often obliged, if he wishes to maintain his govern-

11. Rodrigo Borgia, father of Cesare Borgia; he was pope from 1492 to 1503. (See footnote 2.)

ment, to act contrary to faith, contrary to charity, contrary to humanity, contrary to religion. It is therefore necessary that he have a mind capable of turning in whatever direction the winds of Fortune and the variations of affairs require, and, as I said above, that he should not depart from what is morally right, if he can observe it, but should know how to adopt what is bad, when he is obliged to.

A prince, then, should be very careful that there does not issue from his mouth anything that is not full of the above-mentioned five qualities. To those who see and hear him he should seem all compassion, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion. There is nothing more necessary to make a show of possessing than this last quality. For men in general judge more by their eyes than by their hands; everybody is fitted to see, few to understand. Everybody sees what you appear to be; few make out what you really are. And these few do not dare to oppose the opinion of the many, who have the majesty of the state to confirm their view. In the actions of all men, and especially those of princes, where there is no court to which to appeal, people think of the outcome. A prince needs only to conquer and to maintain his position. The means he has used will always be judged honorable and will be praised by everybody, because the crowd is always caught by appearance and by the outcome of events, and the crowd is all there is in the world; there is no place for the few when the many have room enough. A certain prince of the present day,<sup>12</sup> whom it is not good to name, preaches nothing else than peace and faith, and is wholly opposed to both of them, and both of them, if he had observed them, would many times have taken from him either his reputation or his throne.

[*"Fortune Is a Woman"*]\*

THE POWER OF FORTUNE IN HUMAN AFFAIRS, AND TO WHAT  
EXTENT SHE SHOULD BE RELIED ON

It is not unknown to me that many have been and still are of the opinion that the affairs of this world are so under the direction of Fortune and of God that man's prudence cannot control them; in fact, that man has no resource against them. For this reason many think there is no use in sweating much over such matters, but that one might as well let Chance take control. This opinion has been the more accepted in our times, because of the great changes in the state of the world that have been and now are seen every day, beyond all human surmise. And I myself, when thinking on these things, have now and then in some measure inclined to

12. Ferdinand II, "the Catholic," king of Spain. In refraining from mentioning him, Machiavelli apparently had

in mind the good relations existing between Spain and the house of Medici.

\* Chapter 25.

their view. Nevertheless, because the freedom of the will should not be wholly annulled, I think it may be true that Fortune is arbiter of half of our actions, but that she still leaves the control of the other half, or about that, to us.

I liken her to one of those raging streams that, when they go mad, flood the plains, ruin the trees and the buildings, and take away the fields from one bank and put them down on the other. Everybody flees before them; everybody yields to their onrush without being able to resist anywhere. And though this is their nature, it does not cease to be true that, in calm weather, men can make some provisions against them with walls and dykes, so that, when the streams swell, their waters will go off through a canal, or their currents will not be so wild and do so much damage. The same is true of Fortune. She shows her power where there is no wise preparation for resisting her, and turns her fury where she knows that no walls and dykes have been made to hold her in. And if you consider Italy—the place where these variations occur and the cause that has set them in motion—you will see that she is a country without dykes and without any wall of defence. If, like Germany, Spain, and France, she had had a sufficient bulwark of military vigor, this flood would not have made the great changes it has, or would not have come at all.

And this, I think, is all I need to say on opposing oneself to Fortune, in general. But limiting myself more to particulars, I say that a prince may be seen prospering today and falling in ruin tomorrow, though it does not appear that he has changed in his nature or any of his qualities. I believe this comes, in the first place, from the causes that have been discussed at length in preceding chapters. That is, if a prince bases himself entirely on Fortune, he will fall when she varies. I also believe that a ruler will be successful who adapts his mode of procedure to the quality of the times, and likewise that he will be unsuccessful if the times are out of accord with his procedure. Because it may be seen that in things leading to the end each has before him, namely glory and riches, men proceed differently. One acts with caution, another rashly; one with violence, another with skill; one with patience, another with its opposite; yet with these different methods each one attains his end. Still further, two cautious men will be seen, of whom one comes to his goal, the other does not. Likewise you will see two who succeed with two different methods, one of them being cautious and the other rash. These results are caused by nothing else than the nature of the times, which is or is not in harmony with the procedure of men. It also accounts for what I have mentioned, namely, that two persons, working differently, chance to arrive at the same re-



sult; and that of two who work in the same way, one attains his end, but the other does not.

On the nature of the times also depends the variability of the best method. If a man conducts himself with caution and patience, times and affairs may come around in such a way that his procedure is good, and he goes on successfully. But if times and circumstances change, he is ruined, because he does not change his method of action. There is no man so prudent as to understand how to fit himself to this condition, either because he is unable to deviate from the course to which nature inclines him, or because, having always prospered by walking in one path, he cannot persuade himself to leave it. So the cautious man, when the time comes to go at a reckless pace, does not know how to do it. Hence he comes to ruin. Yet if he could change his nature with the times and with circumstances, his fortune would not be altered.

Pope Julius II proceeded rashly in all his actions, and found the times and circumstances so harmonious with his mode of procedure that he was always so lucky as to succeed. Consider the first enterprise he engaged in, that of Bologna, while Messer Giovanni Bentivogli<sup>13</sup> was still alive. The Venetians were not pleased with it; the King of Spain felt the same way; the Pope was debating such an enterprise with the King of France. Nevertheless, in his courage and rashness Julius personally undertook that expedition. This movement made the King of Spain and the Venetians stand irresolute and motionless, the latter for fear, and the King because of his wish to recover the entire kingdom of Naples. On the other side, the King of France was dragged behind Julius, because the King, seeing that the Pope had moved and wishing to make him a friend in order to put down the Venetians, judged he could not refuse him soldiers without doing him open injury. Julius, then, with his rash movement, attained what no other pontiff, with the utmost human prudence, would have attained. If he had waited to leave Rome until the agreements were fixed and everything arranged, as any other pontiff would have done, he would never have succeeded, for the King of France would have had a thousand excuses, and the others would have raised a thousand fears. I wish to omit his other acts, which are all of the same sort, and all succeeded perfectly. The brevity of his life did not allow him to know anything different. Yet if times had come in which it was necessary to act with caution, they would have ruined him, for he would never have deviated from the methods to which nature inclined him.

13. of the ruling family Bentivogli (the prefix *Messer* means "my lord");

the Pope undertook to dislodge him from Bologna, in 1506.

I conclude, then, that since Fortune is variable and men are set in their ways, they are successful when they are in harmony with Fortune and unsuccessful when they disagree with her. Yet I am of the opinion that it is better to be rash than over-cautious, because Fortune is a woman and, if you wish to keep her down, you must beat her and pound her. It is evident that she allows herself to be overcome by men who treat her in that way rather than by those who proceed coldly. For that reason, like a woman, she is always the friend of young men, because they are less cautious, and more courageous, and command her with more boldness.

[*The Roman Dream*]\*

AN EXHORTATION TO TAKE HOLD OF ITALY AND RESTORE  
HER TO LIBERTY FROM THE BARBARIANS

Having considered all the things discussed above, I have been turning over in my own mind whether at present in Italy the time is ripe for a new prince to win prestige, and whether conditions there give a wise and vigorous ruler occasion to introduce methods that will do him honor, and bring good to the mass of the people of the land. It appears to me that so many things unite for the advantage of a new prince, that I do not know of any time that has ever been more suited for this. And, as I said, if it was necessary to make clear the ability of Moses that the people of Israel should be enslaved in Egypt, and to reveal Cyrus's greatness of mind that the Persians should be oppressed by the Medes, and to demonstrate the excellence of Theseus that the Athenians should be scattered, so at the present time, in order to make known the greatness of an Italian soul, Italy had to be brought down to her present position, to be more a slave than the Hebrews, more a servant than the Persians, more scattered than the Athenians; without head, without government; defeated, plundered, torn asunder, overrun; subject to every sort of disaster.

And though before this, certain persons<sup>14</sup> have showed signs from which it could be inferred that they were chosen by God for the redemption of Italy, nevertheless it has afterwards been seen that in the full current of action they have been cast off by Fortune. So Italy remains without life and awaits the man, whoever he may be, who is to heal her wounds, put an end to the plundering of Lombardy and the tribute laid on Tuscany and the kingdom of Naples, and cure her of those sores that have long been suppurating. She may be seen praying God to send some one to redeem her from these cruel and barbarous insults. She is evidently ready and

\* Chapter 26.

14. possibly Cesare Borgia and Fran-

cesco Sforza, discussed in an earlier chapter of the book.

willing to follow a banner, if only some one will raise it. Nor is there at present anyone to be seen in whom she can put more hope than in your illustrious House,<sup>15</sup> because its fortune and vigor, and the favor of God and of the Church, which it now governs,<sup>16</sup> enable it to be the leader in such a redemption. This will not be very difficult, as you will see if you will bring to mind the actions and lives of those I have named above.<sup>17</sup> And though these men were striking exceptions, yet they were men, and each of them had less opportunity than the present gives; their enterprises were not more just than this, nor easier, nor was God their friend more than he is yours. Here justice is complete. "A way is just to those to whom it is necessary, and arms are holy to him who has no hope save in arms."<sup>18</sup> Everything is now fully disposed for the work, and when that is true an undertaking cannot be difficult, if only your House adopts the methods of those I have set forth as examples. Moreover, we have before our eyes extraordinary and unexampled means prepared by God. The sea has been divided. A cloud has guided you on your way. The rock has given forth water. Manna has fallen.<sup>19</sup> Everything has united to make you great. The rest is for you to do. God does not intend to do everything, lest he deprive us of our free will and the share of glory that belongs to us.

It is no wonder if no one of the above-named Italians<sup>20</sup> has been able to do what we hope your illustrious House can. Nor is it strange if in the many revolutions and military enterprises of Italy, the martial vigor of the land always appears to be exhausted. This is because the old military customs were not good, and there has been nobody able to find new ones. Yet nothing brings so much honor to a man who rises to new power, as the new laws and new methods he discovers. These things, when they are well founded and have greatness in them, make him revered and worthy of admiration. And in Italy matter is not lacking on which to impress forms of every sort. There is great vigor in the limbs if only it is not lacking in the heads. You may see that in duels and combats between small numbers, the Italians have been much superior in force, skill, and intelligence. But when it is a matter of armies, Italians cannot be compared with foreigners. All this comes from the weakness of the heads, because those who know are not obeyed, and each man thinks he knows. Nor up to this time has there been a man able to raise himself so high, through both ability

15. the house of Medici. The *Prince* was first meant for Giuliano de' Medici; after Giuliano's death it was dedicated to his nephew, Lorenzo, later duke of Urbino.

16. Pope Leo X was a Medici (Giovanni de' Medici).

17. in the preceding paragraph.

18. Livy, *History*, Book IX, Chapter 1, paragraph 10.

19. See the allusion to Moses in the preceding paragraph.

20. Possibly a further allusion to Cesare Borgia and Francesco Sforza.

and fortune, that the others would yield to him. The result is that for the past twenty years, in all the wars that have been fought when there has been an army entirely Italian, it has always made a bad showing. Proof of this was given first at the Taro, and then at Alessandria, Capua, Genoa, Vailà, Bologna, and Mestri.<sup>21</sup>

If your illustrious House, then, wishes to imitate those excellent men who redeemed their countries, it is necessary, before everything else, to furnish yourself with your own army, as the true foundation of every enterprise. You cannot have more faithful, nor truer, nor better soldiers. And though every individual of these may be good, they become better as a body when they see that they are commanded by their prince, and honored and trusted by him. It is necessary, therefore, that your House should be prepared with such forces, in order that it may be able to defend itself against the foreigners with Italian courage.

And though the Swiss and the Spanish infantry are properly estimated as terribly effective, yet both have defects. Hence a third type would be able not merely to oppose them but to feel sure of overcoming them. The fact is that the Spaniards are not able to resist cavalry, and the Swiss have reason to fear infantry, when they meet any as determined in battle as themselves. For this reason it has been seen and will be seen in experience that the Spaniards are unable to resist the French cavalry, and the Swiss are overthrown by Spanish infantry. And though of this last a clear instance has not been observed, yet an approach to it appeared in the battle of Ravenna,<sup>22</sup> when the Spanish infantry met the German battalions, who use the same methods as the Swiss. There the Spanish, through their ability and the assistance given by their shields, got within the points of the spears from below, and slew their enemies in security, while the Germans could find no means of resistance. If the cavalry had not charged the Spanish, they would have annihilated the Germans. It is possible, then, for one who realizes the defects of these two types, to equip infantry in a new manner, so that it can resist cavalry and not be afraid of foot-soldiers; but to gain this end they must have weapons of the right sorts, and adopt varied methods of combat. These are some of the things which, when they are put into service as novelties, give reputation and greatness to a new ruler.<sup>23</sup>

This opportunity, then, should not be allowed to pass, in order that after so long a time Italy may see her redeemer. I am unable to express with what love he would be received in all the provinces that have suffered from these foreign deluges; with what thirst for

21. sites of battles occurring between the end of the fifteenth century and the year 1513.

22. between Spaniards and French in

April, 1512.

23. Machiavelli was subsequently the author of a treatise on the *Art of War* (*Arte della guerra*, 1521).

vengeance, what firm faith, what piety, what tears! What gates would be shut against him? what peoples would deny him obedience? what envy would oppose itself to him? what Italian would refuse to follow him? This barbarian rule stinks in every nostril. May your illustrious House, then, undertake this charge with the spirit and the hope with which all just enterprises are taken up, in order that, beneath its ensign, our native land may be ennobled, and, under its auspices, that saying of Petrarch may come true: "Manhood<sup>24</sup> will take arms against fury, and the combat will be short, because in Italian hearts the ancient valor is not yet dead."

24. an etymological translation of p. 784). The quotation is from Petrarch's *canzone* "My Italy" ("Italia mia").  
the original *virtù* (from the Latin *vir*, "man"; see the introductory discussion,

## FRANÇOIS RABELAIS

(1494?-1553)

### *Gargantua and Pantagrue*, Book I\*

[*Education of a Giant Humanist*]

#### CHAPTER 14

*How Gargantua was taught Latin by a Theologian and Sophist.*

The excellent Grangousier was rapt with admiration as he listened to his son<sup>1</sup> talking. Truly this lad was marvellously gifted! What a vast intelligence, what cogent understanding! Turning to the governesses:

"Philip, King of Macedon," he declared, "recognized the sound judgment of Alexander, his son, when he saw how skilfully the lad managed his horse. This beast Bucephalus was so fierce and unruly that it threw all its riders. It cracked one man's neck, smashed another's legs, brained a third, and crushed the jawbone of a fourth. No one, then, dared mount it. Alexander happened to be in the hippodrome watching them breaking in and training the horses; he noticed at once that the beast's frenzy came from fright at its own shadow. He therefore made short shrift of vaulting upon its back and heading it towards the sun. There, its shadow falling behind it, he easily mastered it. Philip, by this token, realized the divine insight rooted in his son's intelligence and had him most carefully reared by Aristotle, then the most renowned philosopher in Greece.

\* Book I was published in 1534; Book II, in 1532; Book III, in 1546; Book IV, in 1552. Book V, of doubtful authenticity, appeared in 1562-1564. Translated by Jacques Le Clercq. From

*The Five Books of Gargantua and Pantagrue*, The Heritage Press, New York, 1942, copyright, 1936, by The Limited Editions Club.  
1. Gargantua.

"For my part, the brief conversation I have just had with Gargantua in your presence suffices to convince me that his mind is illumined by the divine spark. How else, pray, could he have proved so acute, so subtle, so profound and withal so serene? Give the boy proper schooling, say I, and he will attain a supreme degree of wisdom! Accordingly, I intend to trust him to some scholar who will instruct him to his capacity. What is more, I shall spare no cost."

The name of Master Tubal Holofernes, a great sophist and Doctor of Theology, was proposed to Grangousier. Subsequently this savant taught Gargantua his A B C so thoroughly that he could say it by heart backwards. This took five years and three months. A succession of standard texts<sup>2</sup> followed; the *Facet* (a treatise of puerile moral precepts), the *Ars Grammatica* of Actius Donatus, the fourth-century grammarian; the *Theodolet* (in which Theodulus, Bishop of Syria in the fifth century, exposed in Latin the falsity of mythology and the truth of Holy Scripture) and the *Alanus in Parabolis* (a series of moral quatrains by Alanus of Lille, a thirteenth-century worthy). It took Gargantua thirteen years, six months and two weeks to master these authorities.

It is only fair to add, however, that Gargantua, in the process, learned to write in Gothic characters. (Printing had not yet been invented and the young student had to write out his own texts.)

He had, therefore, to carry in front of him a tremendous writing apparatus that weighed more than seven hundred thousand pounds. The pencase was as large and as tall as the great columns of the Church of St. Martin of Ainay in Lyons; the inkhorn was suspended to it by great iron chains wide enough to hold five cubic yards of merchandise.

Another book, *De Modis Significandi*—a work of speculative grammar by Thomas Aquinas, or Albert of Saxony or probably Duns Scotus—was Gargantua's next reading, together with comments by Hurtebize or Windjammer, by Fasquin or Roadheaver, by Tropditeux or Toomanysuch, by Gualehault or Galahad, by Jean Le Veau or John Calf, by Billonio or Lickspittle, by Brelinguandus or Timeserver, and by a rabble of others. This took more than eighteen years and eleven months, but Gargantua knew the texts so well that at examinations he could recite them by heart backwards. And he could prove to his mother on his fingers' ends that *de modis significandi non erat scientia*, grammar was no science.

Next he read the *Compost* or *Popular Calendar*, and had spent sixteen years and two months at it, when suddenly, in 1420, his tutor died of the pox.

2. The books mentioned in this chapter were actually part of the educa-

tional curriculum which Rabelais is here satirizing.



Holofernes' successor was another wheezy old pedant named Master Jobelin Bridé or Jolter Clotpoll, who read him the *Liber Derivationum* or *Latin Vocabulary* of Hugutio of Pisa, thirteenth-century Bishop of Ferrara . . . the *Grecism* by Everard de Béthunc, a philological lexicon illustrating the Latin words derived from the Greek . . . *De Octo Partibus Orationis* or *Of the Eight Parts of Speech* . . . the *Quid Est?* or *What is it?* a school manual in the form of questions and answers . . . the *Supplementum*, a collection of commentaries . . . the *Mammotreptus*, a monkish or monkeyish commentary on the Psalter and the Saints . . . the *Libellus de Moribus in Mensa Servandis* or *Essay on Manners in Serving at Table*, a rhymed treatise on youthful propriety and morals by Sulpizio de Veroli . . . Seneca's *De Quatuor Virtutibus Cardinalibus* or *Of the Four Cardinal Virtues*, a moral work by Martin de Braga, Bishop of Mondonedo in the sixth century . . . the *Specchio della vera Penitenza* or *Mirror of True Penitence* by Jacopo Passavanti, the Florentine monk of the sixteenth century—with its inevitable commentary! . . . a book of sermons, *Dormi Secure* or *Sleep in Peace*, a collection designed to save the preacher the pains of composing his sermons . . . and finally, other stuff of the same ilk, feather, kidney and broth. . . .

Indeed, Gargantua grew as even as any down ever smoothed, as full of matter as any goose liver ever crammed!

## CHAPTER 15

*How Gargantua was put under other professors.*

At last his father realized that though Gargantua was studying most industriously and spending all his time at it, he was profiting not at all. Worse, this training had actually made the lad over into a fool, a dunce, a booby and a nincompoop.

One day Grangousier happened to complain of it to Don Philippe des Marais, Viceroy of Papcligosse, a kingdom of Cockaigne.<sup>3</sup> That monarch assured Grangousier that Gargantua would be better off learning nothing than studying books of the sort with pedagogues of that school. Their knowledge, said Don Philippe, was but rubbish, this wisdom flapdoodle; they succeeded merely in bastardizing noble spirits and corrupting the flower of youth.

"Upon my word, I'll prove it!" Don Philippe declared. "Take any lad of to-day with but two years' schooling. If he is not superior to your son in judgment, speech, bearing and personality, then I'm the greatest loggerhead and shallowpate from here to Brenne."<sup>4</sup>

3. Rabelais probably alludes to some existing person; his method is to take real people and introduce them into his fantastic world. The kingdom of Cockaigne is the traditional imaginary

land of luck and plenty.

4. an actual locality. What was said of Rabelais' characters in footnote 3 applies also to his geography, his local lore, and the like.

This challenge pleased Grangousier mightily; he at once gave orders that a match of wits take place.

That evening, at supper, Don Philippe brought in a young page of his named Eudemon, which means "the fortunate." The lad hailed from Villegongis near St. Genou in Touraine. He was so neat, so spruce, so handsome and his hair was so beautifully combed that he looked more like an angel than like a man.

Don Philippe turned to Grangousier:

"Do you see this lad? He's not twelve years old. Let us prove, if you will, the difference between the pedantic balderdash of yesterday's wiseacres and the intelligence of our modern boys."

Grangousier was agreeable to such a test and bade the page begin the debate. Whereupon Eudemon, asking leave of the Viceroy, his master, to do so, rose, hat in hand. His face was open and frank, his lips red, his glance confident. Looking at Gargantua with youthful modesty, he proceeded to praise and commend the boy—first for his virtues and good manners, next for his knowledge, thirdly for his nobility, fourthly for his bodily excellences and, in the fifth place, exhorted him most gracefully to reverence his father in all respects, because his father was so careful to have him well brought up. Finally, Eudemon prayed Gargantua to admit him among the least of his bondsmen. He added that the only boon he craved from Heaven, at present, was to serve Gargantua in some agreeable manner. Eudemon accompanied the whole speech with gestures so appropriate, his delivery was so distinct, his voice rang so eloquent, his idiom was so elegant and he couched his phrases in such perfect Latin that he seemed rather a Tiberius Gracchus, a Cicero or an Aemilius Lepidus of old, than a youth of our own day.

Gargantua's only reaction was to burst into tears. He bawled like a sick cow, hung his head and hid his face in his cap, until there was about as much possibility of drawing a word from him as a salvo of farts from the rump of a dead donkey.

This so incensed his father that Grangousier vowed to slay Master Jobelin Clotpoll, but Don Philippe remonstrated with him and, by fair persuasions, soothed his ire. Grangousier thereupon ordered them to pay the pedagogue off and to get him as properly fuddled up as your finest scholar of the Sorbonne. This accomplished, let him go to the devil!

"There is this consolation!" cried Grangousier. "To-day at least, he will not cost his host much if by chance he dies in his cups like an Englishman."

When Master Jobelin Clotpoll had gone away, Grangousier asked Don Philippe's advice about a tutor for Gargantua. They finally decided to appoint Ponocrates, Eudemon's teacher, to the position; auspiciously enough, in Greek the name means "vigorous." And



soon, the three were to go to Paris in order to find out what studies young men were at this period pursuing in France.

CHAPTER 16

*How Gargantua went to Paris upon an enormous mare which destroyed the oxflies of the Beauce.*

In the same season, Fayolles, fourth king of Numidia, sent Grangousier a mare from Africa. It was the hugest and most enormous mare ever seen, the strangest monster in the world; for Africa, as the saying goes, may always be relied upon to produce something wonderfully new. The beast was as big as six elephants; like Julius Caesar's charger, her feet were cloven into human toes; her ears hung down like those of the goats of Languedoc; and a little horn grew out of one buttock. Save for a few dapple-gray spots as over-lay, her coat was the color of burnt sorrel, which shows that she partook of the four elements, earth, water, air and fire. Above all, she had a horrible tail. It was more or less as tall as the tower of St. Mars near Langeais; and just as square, with tufts of hair as tightly spun and woven as the beards on ears of corn.

Do you marvel at this? You have greater cause to marvel at the tails of the rams of Scythia, which weighed more than thirty pounds each, or—if Jean Thenaud speaks truthfully in his *Voyage from Angoulême to Cairo*—at those of the Syrian sheep which are so long and heavy that, to hold them up, the natives have to hitch a small cart to the beast's rump. Ha! my lusty country wenchthumpers, you've no such tails as these!

The mare Fayolles sent Grangousier was brought overseas in three Genoese carracks and a brigantine; she landed at Les Sables d'Olonne in Talmondais.

When Grangousier laid eyes upon her:

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "Here is just what my son needs to bear him to Paris! So now, in God's name, all will go well: Gargantua shall be a great scholar one of these days! Were it not for dumb brutes we should all be scholars!"

Next day, having drunk liberally, as you may imagine, Gargantua set out on his journey, accompanied by his tutor Ponocrates, the young page Eudemon and his train. And, because the weather was serene and temperate, Grangousier had a pair of dun-colored boots made for him. According to Babin and the Chinon cobblers, these are technically known as buskins.

So they travelled along the highway very merrily, living on the fat of the land and making the best of cheer, until a little beyond Orléans they came to a huge forest, about thirty-five leagues long and seventeen wide. Alas! the woods were aswarm with oxflies and

hornets of all varieties, so the wretched mares, asses and horses suffered a veritable massacre. But, by means of a trick they never suspected, Gargantua's mare handsomely avenged all the outrages visited upon her kind. For suddenly, when in the heart of the forest the wasps attacked her, she swished her tail and, sweeping all about her, not only felled the stingers but uprooted all the trees. Up and down, right and left, lengthwise and athwart, here and there, over and under, before her and aback, this way and that, she mowed down the woods like so much grass. And this region, which she thus turned into fallow land, has never known tree or wasp since.

Gargantua, delighted by the spectacle, forebore to boast, merely commenting to his followers:

*"Je trouve beau cel I find this pleasant!"*

Whence this pleasant land has been known as Beauce ever since.

However, when it came to breakfasting, they had to content themselves with their yawns; in memory of which the gentlemen of the Beauce, proverbially poor, still subsist on a diet of yawns and gaping, and find it very nourishing. Indeed, they spit all the better for it.

At last they reached Paris, where Gargantua rested two or three days, making merry with his followers and inquiring about what scholars were then in the city and what wines people drank.

. . .

#### CHAPTER 21

*Gargantua's education and social life under the direction of his preceptors at the Sorbonne.*

. . . Gargantua resolved with all his heart to study under the direction of Ponocrates. But the latter, wishing to learn how the lad's former teachers had wasted so much time making a crack-brained, addlebrained dunce of him, decided he should do exactly as he had in the past.

Gargantua therefore arranged his schedule so as to awake usually between eight and nine o'clock, rain or shine, dark or daylight, simply because his preceptors had decided this on the strength of the Psalmist's saw: "*Vanum est vobis ante lucem surgere*, it is vain for you to rise up betimes."<sup>5</sup>

Then he wriggled and writhed, wallowing in his bed and tossing about like a parched pea, the better to stimulate his vital spirits. Next, he would dress, according to the season, but he was always happy to don a long, hanging gown of heavy wool lined with fox. Next, he combed out his hair with the comb of Jacques Almain, the Sorbonne theologian, known in English as John Handy—a comb

5. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep." (Psalm 127:2.)

consisting of four fingers and a thumb—for his mentors maintained that to brush one's hair, wash one's face and make oneself clean were, in this world, a pure waste of time.

Next Gargantua dinged, piddled, vomited, belched, broke wind, yawned, spat, coughed, hiccupped, sneezed and snotted himself as majestically and bountifully as an archdeacon. Next he proceeded to breakfast in order to fortify himself against the morning mist and cold. His menu consisted of splendid fried tripe, choice meats grilled on charcoal, rich hams, succulent roast venison and numerous soups and brews, with toast, cheese, parsley and chopped meat floating on the surface.

Ponocrates objected that he should not eat so soon after rising without having taken any exercise. To which he replied:

"Exercise? Good God, didn't I tumble and jounce in bed six or seven times before I got up? Surely, that is exercise enough? Pope Alexander VI did this on the advice of his Jew physician, Bonnet de Lates, and lived till the day of his death in spite of his enemies. My first masters taught me this habit, for breakfast, they said, gave man a good mind. So they started the day by drinking. It suits me perfectly and I manage to dine the better for it. Master Tubal Holofernes, who was graduated Licentiate in Paris at the head of his class, used to tell me that hasten was not enough, one must set out betimes. By the same token, the total health of mankind does not consist in drinking down and lapping up, *glub, glub, glub*, like so many ducks, but rather in falling to, early in the morning. *Unde versus*; so runs the rune:

Lever matin n'est point bonheur  
Boire matin est le meilleur.

To rise betimes is not enough,  
To drink at morning, that's the stuff!"

After an abundant breakfast, Gargantua repaired to church, with, in his train, a varlet bearing a basket. The latter contained a huge breviary swaddled in velvet and weighing about twelve hundred and six pounds including the filth of thumbmarks, dogeared corners, golden clasps and nonpareil parchment. Twenty-six, if not thirty, masses ensued for the benefit of Gargantua and his chaplain. Under his tall hood, this chaplain looked for all the world like a pcewit . . . and had very thoroughly antidoted his breath against possible poisons with much syrup of the vine! Chaplain and pupil babbled the mumbo jumbo of the litany, thumbing their rosaries so carefully that not one single bead fell to the ground.

As he left the church, they brought him an oxcart laden with a huge heap of paternosters, chaplets and relics from St. Claude in

the Jura, each bigger than a hatblock. Gargantua and his chaplain then strolled in the cloisters, galleries or garden, saying more aves than sixteen hermits.

After, Gargantua would study for a short half-hour, his eyes glued to his book but his mind, to quote Terence's *Eunuch*, wool-gathering in the kitchen.<sup>6</sup> Then he proceeded to make water, filling a large urinal to capacity, after which he sat down at table, and, being naturally phlegmatic, began his meal with a few dozen hams, smoked tongues of beef, caviar, sausages and other like forerunners of wine.

Then four servants in turn shovelled mustard into his mouth by the spadeful, thus preparing him to drain a horrific draught of white wine to relieve his kidneys. Then the meal proper began with viands to his liking, according to the season; Gargantua ceasing to eat only when his belly had reached bursting point.

When it came to drinking, he acknowledged neither end nor rule; for, he said, there were no limits and boundaries to swilling until the tosspot felt the cork soles of his shoes swell up a half-foot from the ground.

## CHAPTER 23

*How Ponocrates gave Gargantua such instruction that not an hour of the day was wasted.*

When Ponocrates saw Gargantua's vicious mode of life, he determined to bring him up otherwise. But for the first few days he bore with him, for he realized that nature cannot endure sudden and violent changes.

To begin his work the better, Ponocrates requested a learned physician of the times, Master Theodore—the name means “God-given”—to examine Gargantua thoroughly with a view to steering him on the right course. The scholar purged Gargantua canonically with Anticyrian hellebore, an herb indicated for cerebral disorders and insanity, thus cleansing his brain of its unnatural, perverse condition. Ponocrates, by the same aperient means, made the lad forget all he had learned under his former teachers, just as Timotheus<sup>7</sup> of old treated pupils who had already studied under other musicians. Timotheus, incidentally, used to charge this class of students double!

For Gargantua's further edification, Ponocrates made him mingle among learned men whose company fired him with a desire to emulate them, to study more profitably and to make his mark. Next,

6. See Terence's play *The Eunuch*, l. 816.

7. Timotheus of Miletus, famous musician of the time of Alexander the Great.

Ponocrates so arranged the lad's schedule that not a moment of the day was wasted; all his time was spent in the pursuit of learning and honest knowledge.

By this new dispensation, Gargantua awoke at about four in the morning. While the servants massaged him, he would listen to some page of Holy Scripture, read aloud in clear tones and pronounced with fitting respect for the text. A young page, a native of Basché, near Chinon, was appointed reader, as his name, Anagnostes,<sup>8</sup> shows. According to the purpose and argument of this lesson, Gargantua frequently turned to worship, adore, pray and reverence Almighty God, Whose majesty and wondrous wisdom were made manifest in the reading.

Next, he would repair to secret places to make excretion of his natural digestions; here his tutor repeated what had been read, expounding its more obscure and difficult features. Returning to the house, they would study the heavens. Was it the same sky they had observed the night before? Into what signs was the sun entering that day? and the moon?

After this astronomical survey, Gargantua was dressed, combed, curled, trimmed and perfumed, and, while this was being done, he heard the lessons of the day before. Then, having recited them by heart, he would argue certain practical, human and utilitarian cases based upon the principles enunciated. This part of the program sometimes took two or three hours, though usually he had exhausted it by the time he was fully clad.

Then, for three good hours, he was read or lectured to, after which they went to the Tennis Court at the Grande Bracque in the Place de l'Estrapade or to the playing fields.

On the way, they discussed various aspects of the subject previously treated. Then they would play tennis, handball and three-cornered catch, exercising their bodies as vigorously as they had exercised their minds before.

All their play was free for they left off when they pleased, which was usually when they had sweated a good bit or were otherwise tired. They were thoroughly wiped and rubbed down, after which they changed their shirts and walked quietly home to see if dinner were ready. As they waited, they would go over certain points they had retained of the lectures.

Meanwhile My Lord Appetite put in an appearance and they sat down most opportunely to table.

At the beginning of the meal, they listened to the reading of some agreeable chronicle of chivalry in ancient times, until Gargantua gave the signal for wine to be served. Then, if they wished, the reading went on or they could talk merrily together. Often they dis-

8. in Greek meaning "reader."

cussed the virtues, property, efficacy and nature of what was served at table: bread, wine, water, salt, meat, fish, fruit, herbs, roots and their preparation. Thus Gargantua soon knew all the relevant passages of Pliny's *Natural History* . . . in the grammarian Athenæus' *Deipnosophistes* or *The Banquet of the Sages*, which treats of flowers, fruits and their various uses . . . in Dioscorides' famous medical treatise, the bible of apothecaries . . . in the *Vocabularium* by Julius Pollux, a grammarian and sophist of Marcus Aurclius' day, who wrote of hunting and fishing . . . in Galen's numerous dissertations upon alimentation . . . in the works of Porphyrius, the third-century Greek author of a *Treatise upon Abstinence from Meat* . . . in Oppian's two poems, *Cynegetica* which deals with venery and *Halieutica* with angling . . . in *Of Healthy Diet* by Polybius of Cos, disciple and son-in-law of Hippocrates . . . in Heliodorus of Emesa, Syrian Bishop of Tricca and a celebrated novelist of the fourth century . . . in Aristotle's essays on natural history . . . in the Greek works upon animals by Claudius Ælianus, a Roman contemporary of Heliogabalus . . . and in various other tomes. . . .<sup>9</sup> Often for surer authority as they argued, they would have the book in question brought to the table. Gargantua so thoroughly and cogently learned and assimilated all he heard that no physician of his times knew one-half so much as he.

They discussed the lessons they had learned that morning and topped their meal off with quiddany, a sort of quince marmalade and an excellent digestive. After which Gargantua picked his teeth with a fragment of mastic,<sup>10</sup> washed his hands and daubed his eyes with cool clear water, and, instead of saying grace, sang the glory of God in noble hymns, composed in praise of divine bounty and munificence.

Presently cards were brought them and they played, not for the sake of the pastime itself but to learn a thousand new tricks and inventions all based on arithmetic.

Thus Gargantua developed a keen enthusiasm for mathematics, spending his leisure after dinner and supper every evening as pleasantly as once he had, dicing and gaming. As a result, he knew so much about its theory and practice that Cuthbert Tunstal, Bishop of Durham and secretary to King Henry VIII, a voluminous writer on the subject,<sup>11</sup> confessed that, beside Gargantua, he knew no more about arithmetic than he did about Old High Gothic. Nor was it arithmetic alone our hero learned, but also such sister sciences as geometry, astronomy and music.

9. Some of the most famous scientific treatises of antiquity are listed in Gargantua's new curriculum, which, exacting as it is, reflects a less "medieval" type of learning than was embodied in his earlier course of study. See also

the enumeration of authors on p. 882.

10. wood from the mastic tree.

11. Tunstal was the author of the treatise *The Art of Computation (De arte supputandi, 1522)*.

Now the digestion of foods is a most important matter. There is the first stage which occurs in the stomach, where the viands are changed into chyle; the second, in the liver, where the chyle is transformed into blood; the third, in the habit of the body, where the blood is finally converted into the substance of each part. So, whilst Gargantua awaited the first stage of digestion, they made a thousand delightful instruments, drew geometrical figures and even applied the principles of astronomy.

After, they amused themselves singing a five-part score or improvising on a theme chosen at random. As for musical instruments, Gargantua learned to play the lute, the spinet, the harp, the nine-holed transverse or German flute, the viol and the sackbut or trombone.

Having spent an hour thus and completed his digestion, he discharged his natural excrements and then settled down again to work three hours or more at his principal study. Either he revised the morning reading, or proceeded in the text at hand or practised penmanship in the most carefully formed characters of modern Roman and ancient Gothic script.

Next, they went out with a young gentleman of Touraine, the esquire Gymnastes, who instructed Gargantua in the art of horsemanship. Having changed his clothes, he proceeded to mount a fiery Italian charger, a Flemish dray horse, a Spanish jennet, an Arab thoroughbred and a hackney. These he would put vigorously through their paces, letting them "career" or gallop a short distance at full speed, making them leap high in the air, jump ditches, clear stiles, and turn short in a ring both to the right and to the left. Next he wielded but did not break his lance, for it is arrant stupidity to boast: "I have broken ten lances in a tilt or fight." A wretched carpenter can do the same. On the contrary, the whole glory of such combat lies in besting ten enemies with one and the same lance. So with strong, stiff, steel-tipped lance, Gargantua would force the outer door of some house, pierce an adversary's armor, beat down a tree, pick up a ring, carry off a cuirassier saddle, a hauberk<sup>12</sup> or a gauntlet. And he performed these feats armed cap-à-pie.<sup>13</sup>

In the technique of parading his horse with prances and flourishes to a fanfare of trumpets—the ceremonial of knights as they enter the lists—he had no equal. As for the divers terms of the equine vocabulary from *giddy-up* and *cluck* to *whoa* and *grrr*, no horseman could hold a candle to him. Indeed Cesare Fieschi, the celebrated jockey of Ferrara, was a mere monkey in comparison.

He learned, too, to leap hastily and with singular dexterity from one horse to another without setting foot to the ground (the nags were circus horses or, to be technical, "desultories"). Further, lance

12. coat of mail.

13. from head to foot.

in hand, he could leap on horseback from either side without stirrups and rule the beast at will without a bridle, for such accomplishments are highly useful in military engagements.

Another day he would practise wielding the battle-axe, which he managed so skilfully, in the nimblest thrusts, the most powerful lunges and the vast encircling sweeps of the art, that he passed knight-at-arms in the field and at all tests. Sometimes unarmed, sometimes carrying a buckler or a rolled cape of mail over his arm or a small shield over his wrist, Gargantua brandished the pike, plied the double-edged, two-handed sword, the bastard claymore used by archers, the Spanish rapier, the dagger and the poniard.

He hunted, too: stag, roebuck, bear, fallow deer, wild boar, hare, partridge, pheasant and otter . . . he played at ball, ever ready with well-aimed foot or powerful fist to send the great sphere whizzing through the air . . . he learned to wrestle and to run. . . . As for jumping, he did not go in for the various forms of running jumps, such as the three-steps-and-a-leap, the hop-step-and-jump or the German high-jump. As Gymnastes pointed out, these were quite useless in warfare. Instead, he practised the standing jumps. Starting from scratch, he could in one leap top a hedge, clear a ditch, mount six paces upon a wall and thus reach a window-ledge one lance's height from the ground.

Gargantua could swim in the deepest water, breaststroke, back and sidestroke, using his whole body or his feet alone. He could cross the breadth of the Seine or the Loire at Montsoreau, dragging his cloak along in his teeth and holding a book high and dry over the waters—thus renewing the exploit with which Plutarch credits Julius Cæsar during the Alexandrian War. Then, using one hand only, he could, with a single great pull, climb into a boat, whence a moment later he would dive headlong into the water again, sound its utmost depths, touch bottom, explore the hollows of rocks and plunge into any pits and abysses he fancied. He would turn the boat about, managing it perfectly, bringing it swiftly or slowly upstream or down and arresting its course at a milldam. He could guide it with one hand while he plied hard about him with a great oar; he could run up a sail, hoist himself up a mast by the shrouds, dance along the yards, operate the compass, tackle the bowlines to sail close to the wind and steer the helm.

His water sports done, he would dash full speed up a mountain, then down quite as fast. He climbed trees like a cat, hopping from one to the next like a squirrel and pulling down great boughs—like the celebrated Milo of Crotona who, Pausanias<sup>14</sup> tells us, met his death devoured by wolves, his hands caught in the cleft of an oak he had sought to split. With two well-steeled daggers and a pair of

14. Greek geographer and traveler of the second century A.D.



well-trying mason's punches, he could scurry up the side of a house like a rat, then leap down again, from roof to ground, so expertly that he landed without hurt. Gargantua also cast the dart, threw the iron bar, put the stone, tossed the boar-spear, hurled the javelin, shied the halberd. He drew the bow to breaking point; he could shoulder a harquebuss—a great siege piece weighing fifty pounds—and fire it off like a crossbow. He could set a huge cannon on its carriage, hit buttmarks and other targets for horizontal shooting, or, point-blank, bring down papgays (stuffed figures of parrots on poles), clay pigeons and other verticle marks, facing them on a level or upwards, or downwards or sidewise. Like the ancient Parthians, he could even hit them as he retreated.

They would tie a cable to a high tower and let it dangle to the ground. Gargantua hoisted himself up with both hands, then slipped down again as evenly, surely and plumb as a man running along a flat meadow. Or they would set a great pole across two trees for Gargantua to hang from by his hands. He moved along the pole from tree to tree so swiftly, without setting foot on *terra firma*, that a man, running on the ground below, could not have caught him. To expand his chest and exercise his lungs, he would roar like all the devils in hell. Once indeed, I heard him call Eudemon across all Paris, from the Porte St. Victor, the gate by the University, all the way to Montmartre, a village on a hill two miles beyond the walls of the city. Stentor,<sup>15</sup> who cried louder than forty men, displayed no such vocal power, even at the siege of Troy.

To develop his sinews, they made him two great pigs of lead, each weighing eight hundred and five tons. These pigs (called salmons in France because the metal is shaped like this fish) Gargantua named *alteres*, an ancient Greek term for the weights used to give jumpers their initial spring—our modern dumb-bells. Taking one in each hand, Gargantua then performed an inimitable feat. He would raise them high above his head and, never turning a hair, stock-still as a statue, hold them aloft for three-quarters of an hour. He played at Barriers or Tug-of-War with the stoutest champions. When his turn came he took root so firmly as to defy the sturdiest to budge him. Nor was it thus alone he emulated Milo of Crotona. Like the ancient athlete, he could hold a pomegranate so fast in his hand that none could wrest it from him, yet so adroitly that he did not crush it.

Having spent his time in such manly sports, he had himself washed, rubbed down and given a change of clothes. Then he returned home at a leisurely pace, passing through some meadow or grassy space to examine the trees and plants. These he would compare with what the authorities wrote of them in their books: among

15. the loud-voiced herald in the *Iliad*, Book V.

the Ancients, Theophrastus, the success of Aristotle and teacher of Menander . . . or Palladius, whose poem *De re rustica* was translated by Pietro Marini . . . or Dioscorides Pedanius, the Greek physician of the first century . . . or Pliny or Nicander or Aemilius Macer, the Roman, or Galen himself. . . . Gargantua and his companions picked specimens by the handful and took them home to a young page named Rhizotome or Rootcutter, who watched over them and the various small mattocks, pickaxes, hooks, hoes, pruning-knives, shears and other botanical instruments.

At home, whilst the servants prepared dinner, our young men repeated certain passages of what had been read. Then they sat down to table. Here I would have you note that their dinner was simple and frugal; they ate no more than necessary to quiet the baying of the belly. Supper, on the contrary, was a large and copious meal; they ate what they needed for their sustenance and nourishment. Such indeed is the true system prescribed by the art of sound, self-respecting physicians though a rabble of dunderhead quacks, wrangling eternally in the claptrap routine of the Arab nostrum shop of Avicenna,<sup>16</sup> recommend the exact opposite. During supper, they continued the lesson given at dinner as long as they saw fit; the rest of the meal was spent in earnest and profitable discussion.

Having said grace, they applied their voices to sing tunefully or they played upon harmonious instruments. Or they amused themselves with such minor pastimes as cards, dice cups and dice afforded. Sometimes they tarried here enjoying themselves and making merry until bedtime; they would visit learned men or such as had travelled in foreign lands. Well into the night, before retiring, they would go to the most exposed spot in the house, whence they examined the face of the sky, noting the comets, if any were visible, and the various figures, positions, aspects, oppositions and conjunctions of the heavenly bodies.

According to the Pythagorean system, Gargantua would, with his tutor, recapitulate briefly all that he had read, seen, learned, done and assimilated in the course of the day.

Then they prayed to God the Creator, doing Him worship and confirming their faith in Him, glorifying Him for His immense goodness, vouchsafing thanks for all the mighty past and imploring His divine clemency for all the future.

And so they retired to rest.

#### CHAPTER 24

##### *How Gargantua spent his time in rainy weather.*

In intemperate or rainy weather, things went on much the same as usual before dinner except that Gargantua had a fine bright fire

16. Arab physician and philosopher (980-1037).

lighted to correct the inclemency of the air. But after dinner, instead of gymnastics, they stayed indoors and, by way of apotherapy<sup>17</sup> or exercise amused themselves by bundling hay, splitting logs, sawing wood and threshing sheaves in the barn. Then they studied the arts of painting and sculpture. Or they revived the ancient Roman game of *Tali*, dicing as the Italian humanist Nicolaus Leonicus Thomaeus<sup>18</sup> wrote of it in his dialogue *Sannutus, Of the Game of Dice*, and as our good friend Janus Lascaris,<sup>19</sup> librarian to our sovereign king, plays at the game. In their sport, they reviewed such passages of ancient authors as mention or quote some metaphor drawn from this play.

In much the same way, they might go to watch workmen forging metals or casting pieces of ordnance. Or they might visit the lapidaries, goldsmiths and cutters of precious stones in their ateliers, the alchemists in their laboratories, the coiners at the mint, the tapestry-workers, velvet-workers and weavers at their looms, the watchmakers, looking-glass framers, printers, lutemakers, dyers and other such artisans in their workshops. Wherever they went, they would distribute gratuities, invariably investigating and learning the various inventions and industry of the trade.

Or they might attend public lectures, official convocations, oratorical performances, speeches, pleadings by eloquent attorneys and sermons by evangelical preachers—that is, such priests as wished to restore Christianity to the primitive tradition of the Gospel. Gargantua also frequented fencing halls and tested his skill at all weapons against the masters, proving to them by experience that he knew as much as they and, indeed, even more.

Instead of herborizing,<sup>20</sup> they would inspect the shops of druggists, herbalists and apothecaries, studiously examining the sundry fruits, roots, leaves, gums, seeds and exotic unguents and learning how they could be diluted or adulterated. He viewed jugglers, mountebanks and medicasters—who sold Venice treacle, a cure for all ills—carefully observing their tricks and gestures, their agile capers and smooth oratory. His favorites were those from Chauny in Picardy who are born jabberers and the readiest expounders of mealy-mouthed flimflam concerning their ability to weave ropes of sand, extract sunbeams from cucumbers and milk a he-goat into a sieve.

Returning home to supper, they would eat more sparingly than on fine days. Their meats would, by the same token, be more desiccative and extenuating so as to counteract the humidity communicated to their bodies by the necessary contiguity of the atmosphere

17. physical exercise as a regime to maintain health. The terminology is from Galen (the outstanding Greek physician of the second century A.D.).

18. a Venetian, professor at Padua

(died 1531).

19. André Jean de Lascaris, librarian to King Francis I and a friend of Rabelais'.

20. gathering herbs.

and to nullify what harm might arise from lack of their customary exercise.

Such was Gargantua's program and so he continued from day to day, benefiting as you would expect a young man of his age and intelligence to benefit under such a system faithfully applied. To be sure, the whole thing may have seemed incredibly difficult to him at the outset, but it soon proved so light, so easy and so pleasant as to appear more like a king's pastime than the study of a schoolboy.

However, Ponocrates was careful to supply relaxation from this violent bodily and mental tension. Once a month, on some very bright serene day, they would clear out of town early in the morning, bound for the near-by villages of Gentilly, Boulogne, Mont-rouge, Pont-de-Charenton, Vanves or St. Cloud. There they spent the whole day enjoying themselves to their heart's content, sporting and merrymaking, drinking toast for proffered toast, playing, singing, dancing, tumbling about or loafing in some fair meadow, turning sparrows out of their nests, bagging quail and fishing for frogs and crayfish.

But though this holiday was free of books and reading, it was not spent unprofitably. Lying in the green meadow, they usually recited certain delightful lines from Virgil's *Georgics*, from Hesiod's *Works and Days* or from Politian's *Husbandry*.<sup>21</sup> Or they broached some savory epigram in Latin, then turned it into a French roundelay or ballade.

In their feasting, they would sometimes separate the twin elements, isolating the wine and the water in their drink by pouring the latter into a cup of ivy-wood, as Cato teaches in his *De re rustica*, and Pliny elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> Then they would wash the wine in a basin full of water and draw it out with a funnel, as pure as ever. And they pumped the water with a syphon from one glass to another, manufacturing several sorts of automatic or self-operating devices.

### [The Abbey of Thélème]

#### CHAPTER 52

*How Gargantua had the Abbey of Thélème built for the monk.*

There remained only the monk<sup>23</sup> to provide for. Gargantua offered him the Abbey of Seuilly: he refused. What about the Bene-

21. a poem, *Rusticus*, in the manner of Virgil's *Georgics*, by the Italian fifteenth-century poet Politian.

22. Both Cato in his book *On Farming* (*De re rustica*), CIX, and Pliny in his *Natural History* (*Historia naturalis*), Book XVI, Chapter 63, suggest

an ivy-wood cup as a means to detect water in wine.

23. Friar John of the Funnels, the muscular and highly unconventional monk who has had a major part in helping the party of Gargantua's father win the mock-heroic war against the arrogant Picrochole.

dictine abbeys of Bourgueil or St. Florent, among the richest in France: he might have either or both?<sup>24</sup> Again, the offer met with a flat refusal: Friar John of the Funnels answered peremptorily that he did not seek the charge or government of monks.

"For," he explained, "how shall I govern others when I cannot possibly govern myself?" There was a pause. "But—" he hesitated. "But if you believe I have given and can give you good service, let me found an abbey after my own heart."

The notion delighted Gargantua: he forthwith offered his estate of Thélème, by the Loire, two leagues away from Port Huault. Thélème in Greek means free will, an auspicious name for Friar John's abbey. Here indeed he could institute a religious order contrary to all others.

"First," said Gargantua, "you must not build a wall around it, for all other abbeys are solidly enclosed."

"Quite so," agreed the monk, "for where there are *mures*, walls, before, and *mures*, walls, behind, we have *murmures*, murmurs of envy and plotting."

Now in certain monasteries it is a rule that if any women enter (I mean honest and chaste ones) the ground they tread upon must be swept over. Therefore it was decreed that if a monk or nun should by any chance enter Thélème, every place that religious passed through should be thoroughly disinfected.

Similarly because all monasteries and convents on earth are compassed, limited and regulated by hours, at Thélème no clock or dial of any sort should be tolerated. On the contrary, their time here would be governed by what occasions and opportunities might arise. As Gargantua sagaciously commented: :

"I can conceive of no greater waste of time than to count the hours. What good comes of it? To order your life by the toll of a bell instead of by reason or common sense is the veriest piece of asininity imaginable."

By the same token, they established the qualifications for entrance into their order. Was it not true that at present women took the veil only if they were wall-eyed, lame, hunchbacked, ill-favored, misshapen, half-witted, unreasonable or somewhat damaged? That only such men entered monasteries as were cankered, ill-bred idiots or plain nuisances?

("Incidentally," said Friar John, "if the woman is neither fair nor good, of what use is the cloth?")

"Let the clot hump her," Gargantua replied.

"I said 'cloth' not 'clot.'"

"Well, what's the answer?"

"To cover her face or her arse with!")

24. a satiric allusion to the custom of accumulating church livings.

Accordingly, they decided to admit into the new order only such women as were beautiful, shapely, pleasing of form and nature, and such men as were handsome, athletic and personable.

Again, because men entered the convents of this world only by guile and stealth, it was decreed that no women would be in Thélème unless men were there also, and vice-versa.

Moreover, since both men in monasteries and women in convents were forced after their year of noviciate to stay there perpetually, Gargantua and Friar John decided that the Thélémites, men or women, might come and go whenever they saw fit.

Further, since the religious usually made the triple vow of chastity, poverty and obedience, at Thélème all had full leave to marry honestly, to enjoy wealth and to live in perfect freedom.

As for the age of initiation, they stipulated that women were admissible between the ages of ten and fifteen, men between twelve and eighteen.

#### CHAPTER 53

##### *How the Abbey of Thélème was built and endowed.*

To build and furnish the abbey, Gargantua paid in cash twenty-seven hundred thousand eight hundred and thirty-one crowns in current coin of the realm, fresh from the mint, with a sheep on the obverse and the king's head on the reverse. He undertook to pay yearly, until the project was completed, sixteen hundred and sixty-nine thousand crowns, with the sum on the obverse, and as many again with the seven stars, the whole to be levied upon custom receipts.

For the foundation and maintenance of Thélème, he settled in perpetuity twenty-three hundred and sixty-nine thousand, five hundred and fourteen nobles (a coin stamped by the English kings with the rose of York), free of all tax, burden or fealty, payable yearly at the abbey gate. These privileges were all corroborated by letters patent.

The building was hexagonal; in each corner rose a great, circular tower, each identical, sixty yards in diameter. To the north, the river Loire flowed past the first tower which was named *Arctice* or Northern. East of it rose *Calaer* which means "situated in the balmy air"; then, successively, *Anatole* or Eastern; *Mesembrine* or Southern; *Hesperia* or Occidental; and the last, *Cryere* or Glacial. The distance between each tower was three hundred and twelve yards. The building was throughout six storeys high, counting the underground cellar for one. The ground floor was vaulted like a basket handle; the others, covered with Flanders mistletoe, jutting out like brackets and pendants. The roof, of finest slate, was lined with lead and bore little figures of mannikins and animals well as-

sorted and gilt. The gutters jutted out from the walls between the casement arches; they were painted diagonally gold and blue down to the ground, where they ended in pipes which carried the water into the river below.

This building was a hundred times more magnificent than Bon-nivet, Chambord or Chantilly.<sup>25</sup> There were nine thousand three hundred and thirty-two suites, each with a salon, a study, a dressing room, an oratory and an exit into a great hall. In the wing between each tower was a winding stairway. The steps, grouped in units of twelve between each landing, were of porphyry, of Numidian stone, of serpentine marble; they were twenty-two feet long and three fingers thick. At each landing, two splendid round antique archways admitted the light and led to an open loggia of the same dimensions. The stairway, rising to the roof, ended in a pavilion; on either side lay a great hall which in turn led to the apartments.

The wing between the towers called *Arctice* and *Cryere* contained rich libraries of Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, Italian and Spanish volumes, grouped in their respective sections. In the centre rose a marvellous winding ramp conceived in such ample proportions that six soldiers with their lances at rest could ride up it abreast to the top of the palace. Its entry, outside the house, was an archway six fathoms wide.

Between *Anatole* and *Mesembrine* were spacious galleries with murals representing heroic feats of olden times, scenes from history and pictures of the earth. Here again were a stairway and gate as described upon the river side. On this gate, couched in great antique letters, ran the following legend.

#### CHAPTER 54

*Inscription engraved on the main gate at Thélème.*

Here enter not, smug hypocrites or holy loons,  
Bigots, sham-Abrahams, impostors of the cloth,  
Mealy-mouthed humbugs, holier-than-thou baboons,  
Lip-service lubbers, smell-feast picaroons.<sup>26</sup>  
Else had we to admit the Goth and Ostrogoth  
Precursors of the ape and others of that broth.  
Hence, sneaks and mischief-makers, colporteurs of lies,  
Be off to other parts to sell your merchandise.

Being foul you would befoul  
Man, woman, beast or fowl.

25. châteaux built in the early and middle years of the sixteenth century. By referring to actual buildings, building materials, and architectural ele-

ments, Rabelais as usual mixes realism with his fantasy.

26. various ways of saying "hypocritical bigots."

The vileness of your ways  
 Would sully my sweet lays,  
 Owls—And your own black cowl,  
 Being foul, you would befoul.

Here enter not, defenders of dishonest pleas,  
 Clerks, barristers, attorneys who make freemen slaves,  
 Canon Law pettifoggers, censors, Pharisees,  
 Judges, assessors, arbitrators, referees  
 Who blithely doom good people to untimely graves,  
 The gibbet is your destination, legal knaves!  
 Be off: indict the rope if you should find it short,  
 Here there is no abuse; we do not need your court.

Tangle, wrangle, brangle  
 We loathe, from any angle.  
 Our aim is joy and sport,  
 Time's swift, youth's fleet, life's short.  
 You, go and disentangle  
 Tangle, wrangle, brangle!

Here enter not, curmudgeon, loan shark, muckworm, hunks,  
 Bloodsucking usurer, extortioner, pennystint, . . .  
 Hence, lawsuit-chasing crimps, greedy as starving punks  
 Tracking a patron; lickgolts, hiding cash in trunks,  
 Harpyclaws, crunchfists, jaundiced zealots of the mint,  
 Your crackling, sallow palms are itching. Skin a flint!  
 Heap up your hoard, O scrub-faced curs, heap up afresh,  
 And as you grudge and gripe and screw, God rot your flesh!

Those grim and grisly faces  
 Bear all the ravaged traces  
 Of hidebound avarice;  
 We cannot stomach this.  
 Banish from all blithe places  
 Those grim and grisly faces.

Here enter not, you churls, sour boors, invidious fools,  
 Old, jealous brabblers, scolds, neither by night nor day,  
 Nor grumblers, sorcheads, sulkers, badgers bred in schools  
 Of hate; nor ghosts of malaperts; nor firebrands' ghouls  
 From Rhineland, Greece or Rome, fiercer than wolves at bay,  
 Nor you, riddled with pox, your face a Milky Way  
 Of scars not stars; nor you, clapstricken to the bone:  
 Enjoy your shameless crusts and blemishes alone.

Honor, praise and pleasure  
 Are here in goodly measure:



Health reigns supreme because  
We follow Nature's laws.  
Ours is a triple treasure:  
Honor, praise and pleasure.

But enter here thrice welcome, men of goodly parts,  
Gallants and noble gentlemen, thrice welcome be!  
Here you will find an abbey after your own hearts,  
Where living is esteemed the highest of the arts.  
Come in your tens and hundreds, come in thousands, we  
Shall clasp you to our bosoms in fond anity:  
Come wise, come proud, come gay, come courteous, come mellow,  
Come true sophisticate, come worldling, come, good fellow!

Comrades, companions, friends,  
Assemble from the ends  
Of earth in this fair place  
Where all is mirth and grace.  
Felicity here blends  
Comrades, companions, friends.

Here enter, all ye loyal scholars who expound  
Novel interpretations of the Holy Writ.  
Here is a fort and refuge; from this favored ground  
You may confound the error that is elsewhere found,  
You may found a profound new faith instead of it,  
Sweeping away false teachings, bit by fallacious bit.  
Come unto us and make your cogent meanings heard:  
Destroy the foes of God and of his Holy Word.

The Holy Word of God  
Shall never be downtrod  
Here in this holy place,  
If all deem reason grace,  
And use for staff and rod  
The Holy Word of God.

Here enter, ladies fair of eminent degree,  
Come soon with starry eyes, lips smiling, comely face,  
Flowers of loveliness, angels of harmony,  
Resplendent, proud yet of the rarest modesty,  
Sprightly of flesh, lithe-waisted and compact of grace,  
Here is your home. A gallant lord designed this place  
For you, that beauty, charm and virtue might find room  
Deliciously to breathe, exquisitely to bloom.

Who makes a priceless gift  
Wins pardon without shrift.

Donor, recipient  
 Alike find rich content.  
 To him your voices lift  
 Who makes a priceless gift.

## CHAPTER 55

*How the monks and nuns lived at Thélème.*

In the middle of the lower court stood a magnificent alabaster fountain, surmounted by the Three Graces holding cornucopias and spouting water through their breasts, mouths, ears, eyes and other orifices. The buildings above this court stood upon great pillars of chalcedony and porphyry, forming classical arches about lengthy wide galleries adorned with paintings and trophies of various animals: the horns of bucks, unicorns and hippopotami, elephants' tusks and sundry other curiosities.

The ladies' quarters ran from *Arctice* all the way to the *Mesembrine* Gate; the rest of the abbey was reserved for men. In front of this part, between the outer two towers, lay the recreational facilities: the tilting yard, the riding school, the theatre and the natatorium which included wonderful swimming pools on three different levels, with every sort of equipment and myrtle water aplenty.

Near the river was the fine pleasure garden, with, in the middle, a maze. Tennis courts and football fields spread out between the next two towers. Close to *Cryere*, an orchard offered a mass of fruit trees laid out in quincunxes, with, at its end, a sily park abounding in venison.

The space between the third pair of towers was reserved for the shooting ranges: here were targets and butts for harquebuss, long bow and crossbow. The servants' quarters, one storey high, were situated outside *Hesperia*. Beyond was the falconry, managed by expert falconers and hawk trainers and annually supplied by the Cretans, Venetians and Sarmatian Poles with all manner of birds. There were priceless eagles for hunting hares, foxes and cranes. There were gerfalcons, goshawks, sakers for hunting wild geese, herons and bitterns. There were falcons, lanners, sparrowhawks and merlins for hunting larks and partridges. Other birds there were, too, in great quantities, so well trained that when they flew afield for their own sport they never failed to catch every bird they encountered. . . . The venery with its hounds and beagles stood a little further along towards the park.

All the halls, apartments and chambers were richly hung with tapestries varying with the season; the floors were covered with green cloth, the beds all embroidered. Each rear chamber boasted a pierglass set in a heavy gold frame adorned with pearls. Near the

exits of the ladies' halls were the perfumers and hairdressers who ministered to the gentlemen before the latter visited the ladies. These attendants furnished the ladies' rooms with rose water, orange-flower water and angelica, supplying a precious small atomizer to give forth the most exquisite aromatic perfumes.

#### CHAPTER 56

*How the monks and nuns of Thélème were apparelled.*

When first the abbey was founded, the ladies dressed according to their taste and pleasure. Subsequently of their own free will they modified their costume as follows.

They wore hose, of scarlet or kermes-red, reaching some three inches above the knee, the edge being exquisitely embroidered or slashed. Their garters, which matched their bracelets, came both a whit over and under the knee. Their shoes, pumps and slippers were of red, violet or crimson velvet and jagged as a lobster's claws.

Over their slips, they put on a tight tunic of pure silk camlet, and over that a taffeta farthingale or petticoat, red, white, beige, gray or of any other color. Above this farthingale went a skirt of silver taffeta, with fine gold embroidery and delicate cross-stitch work. According to the temperature, the season or the ladies' whim, these skirts might be satin, damask or velvet and, in color, orange, green, cendré, blue, canary yellow, scarlet, crimson or white, or of cloth-of-gold, cloth-of-silver, or any other choice material variously embroidered, stitched, brocaded or spangled according to the occasion for which they were worn.

Their gowns, or over-garments, were also governed by timely considerations. They might be cloth-of-gold with silver enbossing or red satin with gold brocade or taffeta, white, blue, black or tawny. Or they might be silk rep, silk camlet, velvet, cloth-of-silver, cloth-of-gold or satin variously figured with gold and silver thread.

In summer, instead of these gowns, they wore lovely light smocks made of the same material, or capes, Moorish-fashion, with hoods to protect and shade their faces from the sun. These Moresco capes were of violet velvet, having raised gold stitching over silver purl or gold piping and cording, with small Indian pearls at their ends. And ever a gay colored plume, the color of their sleeves, bravely garnished with gold! In winter, their gowns were of taffeta in all the colors mentioned above, but lined with lynx, weasel, Calabrian marten, sable and other rare fur. Their beads, rings, chains and necklaces were of precious stones: carbuncles, rubies, balas rubies, diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, turquoises, garnets, agates, beryls and priceless pearls.

Their headgear also varied with the season. In winter, it was in

the French fashion with a cap over the temples covered by a velvet hood with hanging veil. In spring it was in the Spanish, with laces and veils. In summer it was in the Tuscan, the hair elaborately entwined with gold chains and jewels. On Sundays and holidays, however, they followed the French mode which is more seemly and modest.

The men, too, dressed according to their personal taste. Their hose were of light wool or serge cloth, white, black, scarlet or kermes-red. Their velvet breeches were of the same hue or almost; they were embroidered or slashed to their taste. The doublet was of cloth-of-gold, cloth-of-silver, velvet, satin or damask, embroidered, panelled or slashed on one model, the points silk to match and the ornaments of fine enamelled gold.

Their cloaks and jerkins were of cloth-of-gold, cloth-of-silver, gold tissue or velvet, purfled or brocaded at pleasure; their overgarments were every whit as costly as the ladies'. Their girdles were silk, matching their doublets. Each wore on his side a handsome sword with gilt hilt and pommel; the scabbard velvet, matching his breeches, and the ferrule a wondrous example of the goldsmith's art. So too the dagger. Their caps were of black velvet, trimmed with jewels and rings and buttons of gold, with a white plume set in jauntily and parted by many rows of spangles from which hung splendid emeralds and various other stones.

Such was the sympathy between the gallants and their ladies that they matched one another's costumes every day. And in order to be sure of it, certain gentlemen were appointed to report every morning to the youths what garments their ladies planned to wear on that occasion. All here was done for the pleasure of the fair.

Handsome though the clothes were and rich the accoutrements, lads or girls wasted no time in dressing. The wardrobe masters had everything ready before their gentlemen arose and the maids were so nimble that in a trice their mistresses were apparelled from head to toe.

To facilitate matters, over a distance of half-a-league, a row of light, well-appointed cottages housed the goldsmiths, lapidaries, embroiderers, tailors, gold drawers, velvet weavers, tapestry makers and upholsterers. Here each worked at his trade, and all for the jolly friars and comely nuns of the new abbey. They received materials and stuffs from My Lord Nausiclete, famous for his ships, as the name indicates. Each year brought them seven vessels from the Pearl and Cannibal Islands or Antilles, laden with ingots of gold, raw silk, pearls and precious stones.

If pearls through age tended to lose their lustre, the jewellers, following the method of Avicenna,<sup>27</sup> fed them to the roosters, and they regained their native sparkle.

27. See footnote 16.

CHAPTER 57

*How those of Thélème were governed in their manner of living.*

Their whole life was ordered not by law, statute or rule, but according to their free will and pleasure. They arose when they pleased. They ate, drank, worked and slept when the spirit moved them. No one awoke them, forced food or drink upon them or *made* them do anything else. Gargantua's plan called for perfect liberty. The only rule of the house was:

DO AS THOU WILT

because men that are free, of gentle birth, well-bred and at home in civilized company possess a natural instinct that inclines them to virtue and saves them from vice. This instinct they name their honor. Sometimes they may be depressed or enslaved by subjection or constraint; for we all long for forbidden fruit and covet what is denied us. But they usually apply the fine forces that tend to virtue in such a way as to shake off the yoke of servitude.

The Thélémities, thanks to their liberty, knew the virtues of emulation. All wished to do what they saw pleased one of their number. Let some lad or maid say "Let us drink" and all of them drank, "Let us play" and all of them played, "Let us frolic in the fields" and all of them frolicked. When falconry or hawking were in order, the ladies sat high upon their saddles on fine nags, a sparrowhawk, lanner or merlin on one daintily gloved wrist, while the men bore other kinds of hawks.

They were so well-bred that none, man or woman, but could read, write, sing, play several instruments, speak five or six languages and readily compose verse and prose in any of them. Never had earth known knights so proud, so gallant, so adroit on horseback and on foot, so athletic, so lively, so well-trained in arms as these. Never were ladies seen so dainty, so comely, so winsome, so deft at handwork and needlework, so skilful in feminine arts, so frank and so free as these.

Thus when the time came for a man to leave the abbey (either at his parents' request or for some other reason) he took with him one of the ladies—the particular one who had chosen him for her knight—and they were married. And though they had lived in devotion and friendship at Thélème, their marriage relations proved even more tender and agreeable. Indeed to the end of their lives they loved one another as they had on the day of their wedding. . . .

## Gargantua and Pantagruel, Book II

[Pantagruel: Birth and Education]

## CHAPTER 2

*Of the nativity of the most redoubtable Pantagruel.*

At the age of four hundred fourscore and forty-four years, Gargantua begat his son Pantagruel upon his wife named Badebec, daughter to the king of the dimly-seen Amaurotes in Utopia.<sup>28</sup> She died in the throes of childbirth. Alas! Pantagruel was so extraordinarily large and heavy that he could not possibly come to light without suffocating his mother.

If you would fully understand how he came to be christened Pantagruel, you must remember that a terrible drought raged that year throughout the land of Africa. For thirty-six months, three weeks, four days, thirteen hours and even longer, there was no drop of rain. And the sun blazed so fiercely that the whole earth was parched.

Even in the days of Elijah, the soil was no drier, for now no tree on earth bore leaf or flower. The grass had no verdure; rivers and springs ran dry; the luckless fishes, abandoned by their element, crawled on solid earth, crying and screaming most horribly. Birds fell from the air for want of moisture; wolves, foxes, harts, wild boars, fallow deer, hares, rabbits, weasels, martens, badgers and other beasts were found dead in the fields, their mouths agape.

As for the men, their state was very pitious. You should have seen them with their tongues dangling like a hound's after a run of six hours. Not a few threw themselves into the wells. Others lay under a cow's belly to enjoy the shade—these it is whom Homer calls *Alibantes*, the desiccated.<sup>29</sup> The whole country was at a standstill. The strenuous efforts of mortals against the vehemence of this drought was a horrible spectacle. It was hard enough, God knows, to save the holy water in the churches from being wasted; but My Lords the Cardinals and our Holy Father laid down such strict rules that no man dared take more than a lick of it. In the churches, scores of parched, unhappy wretches followed the priest who distributed it, their jaws yawning for one tiny dribble. Like the rich man in *Luke*, who cried for Lazarus to dip his fingers in water, they were tormented by a flame,<sup>30</sup> and would not suffer the slightest

28. names taken from Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*. Literally, "no place," the word *Utopia* has become synonymous with "ideal country."

29. The allusion to Homer is apparently mistaken, but "*Alibantes*"—possibly derived from the name of *Alibas*, a dry river in hell—is used by

other ancient writers with reference to the dead or the very old.

30. "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." (Luke 16:24.)

drop to be wasted. Ah! thrice happy that year the man who had a cool, well-plenished wine cellar underground!

In discussing the question: "Why is sea water salty?" the philosopher Aristotle, after Empedocles, supplies the following reason. When Phœbus gave the reins of his luminous chariot<sup>31</sup> to Phaëton, his son, the latter, unskilled in the art of driving, was incapable of following the ecliptic lines between the two tropics of the sun's sphere. Accordingly, he strayed from the appointed path and came so close to earth that he dried up all the countries under his course. He also burnished that great portion of heaven which philosophers call *Via Lactea* or the Milky Way, and good drinkers St. James' Way, since it is the starry line that guides pilgrims to Santiago de Compostella. (On the other hand, poets declare that it is here Juno's milk dropped while she was suckling Hercules.)

Earth at that time was so excessively heated that it broke into an enormous sweat which ran over the sea, making the latter salty, since all sweat is salt. If you do not admit this last statement, then taste of your own sweat. Or savor the perspiration of your pox-stricken friends when they are put in sweatboxes for treatment. It is all one to me.

Practically the same thing happened the year I am speaking of. On a certain Friday, all the people were intent upon their devotions. A noble procession was in progress with plenty of litanies and fine preachings. Supplications arose toward Almighty God beseeching Him to cast His eye of mercy upon them in their affliction. Suddenly they clearly saw some great drops of water stand out upon the ground, exactly as from a person sweating copiously.

The wretched populace began to rejoice as though here were a great blessing. Some declared that, since the air lacked all moisture, earth was supplying the deficiency. Other scientists asseverated that it was a shower of the Antipodes, as described by Seneca in *Quæstiones Naturales*, Book IV, where he treats of the Nile's source, attributing its floods to distant rains washed underground into the river. But they were thoroughly deceived. For, the procession done, when each sought to gather up this dew and drink it up by the bowlful, they found it was only pickle, far saltier than the saltiest water of the sea.

Another great mishap befell Gargantua that week. A dungchafing lout, bearing two great bags of salt and a hambone in his gamepouch, walked into poor Gargantua's mouth as the giant lay snoring. The clod spilled a quantity of salt in Gargantua's throat. Gargantua, crazy with a thirst he could not slake, angrily snapped his mouth shut. He gnashed his teeth fiercely; they ground like millstones. Later the rascal told me he was so terrified you could have

31. the chariot of the sun.

stopped up his nose with a bale of hay. He fell flat on his face like a dead man, dropping the two saltbags that had tormented Gargantua. They were at once swallowed up and entombed.

My rogue vowed vengeance. Thrusting his hand in his gamepouch, he drew out a great hambone, highly salted, still covered with hair, and twenty-eight inches long. Ragefully he rammed it down Gargantua's throat. The giant, drier than ever, felt the pig's hair tickling his belly and, willy-nilly, spewed up all he had. Eighteen tumbrils could not have drawn away the rich nauseous yield. My dungchafer, hidden in the cavity of one of his teeth, was forced to take French leave in such pitiful condition that all who saw him were horrified. Gargantua, looking down, noticed this jackpudding whirling about in a great puddle.

"Here is some worm that sought to sting me in the belly," he mused, happy to have expelled him from his body.

Because he was born that very day, his father called him Pantagruel or All-Athirst, a name derived from the Greek *panta* meaning all, and the Hagarenc or Saracen *gruel* meaning athirst. Gargantua inferred thereby that at his son's birth the entire universe was wholly parched. Prophetically, too, he realized that some day Pantagruel would become Supreme Lord of the Thirsty, a fact indicated even more surely by a further portent.

For while his mother Badebec was bringing him forth and the midwives stood by ready to receive him, there first issued from her belly seventy-eight salt-vendors, each leading a salt-laden mule by the halter. They were followed by nine dromedaries, bearing hams and smoked oxtongues; seven camels bearing chitterlings; twenty-five cartloads of leeks, garlic, onions and chives. This terrified some midwives, but others said:

"Here is good provision! As it is, we drink but lazily, instead of vigorously. This must be a good omen, since these victuals are spurs to bibbing wine!"

As they were tattling away, out pops Pantagruel, hairy as a bear! At which, prophetically, one of them exclaimed:

"God help us, he is born hair and all, straight from the arse of Satan in flight. He will do terrible wonders. If he lives, he will grow to a lusty age!"

Of Pantagruel's race are those who drink so heavily in the evening that they must rise at night to drink again, quenching the coals of fire and blistering thirst in their throats. This form of thirst is called Pantagruel, in memory of the giant.



[Father's Letter from Home]

CHAPTER 8

*How Pantagruel in Paris received a letter from his father Gargantua.*

As you may suppose, Pantagruel studied very hard and profited much by his study, for his intelligence was naturally active and his memory as full as twelve casks of olives. While in Paris,<sup>32</sup> he received the following letter from his father:

MY BELOVED SON,

Among the gifts, graces and prerogatives with which our sovereign Creator, God Almighty, blessed and enriched humanity from the beginning, there is one that I deem supreme. By its means, though we be mortal, we can yet achieve a sort of immortality; through it, we may, in the course of our transitory lives, yet perpetuate our name and race.

To be sure, what we gain by a progeny born of lawful wedlock cannot make up for what we lost through the sin of our first parents. Adam and Eve disobeyed the commandments of the Lord their God: mortality was their punishment. By death the magnificent mould in which Man was fashioned vanished into the dust of oblivion.

However, thanks to seminal propagation, what a man loses his children revive and, where they fail, ~~their~~ children prevail. So it has gone, and so it shall be, from generation to generation, until the Day of Judgment, when Christ shall restore to God the Father His kingdom pacified, secured and cleansed of all sin. Then all generations and corruption shall cease, for the elements will have completed their continuous transmutations. The peace humanity has craved so anxiously will have been attained; all things will have been reduced to their appointed end and period.

I therefore have reason to give thanks to God, my Saviour, for having granted me the joy of beholding my old age blossom anew in your youth. When, by His pleasure, which rules and orders everything, my soul must abandon this human habitation, I shall not believe I am dying utterly, but rather passing from one place to another. For in you my visible image will continue to live on earth; by you, I shall go on frequenting honorable men and true friends, as I was wont to do.

My associations have not been without sin, I confess. We all transgress and must continually beseech God to forgive us our

32. Like his father before him, Pantagruel has been sent to Paris to study. The following letter, patterned after Ciceronian models of eloquence,

summarizes Rabelais' view of an ideal education, and generally illustrates the attitude of the Renaissance intellectual elite toward culture.

trespasses. But they have been without reproach in the eyes of men.

That is why if, beside my bodily image, my soul did not likewise shine in you, you would not be accounted worthy of guarding the precious immortality of my name. In that case, the least part of me (my body) would endure. Scant satisfaction, that, when the best part (my soul, which should keep my name blessed among men) had degenerated and been bastardized. I say this not through any doubt as to your virtue, which I have already often tested, but to encourage you to go on doing ever better and profiting by your constant improvement.

My purpose is not so much to keep you absolutely on your present virtuous course as to make you rejoice that you have kept and are keeping on it. I seek to quicken your heart with resolutions for the future. To help you make and carry these out, remember that I have spared nothing. I have helped you as though my sole treasure on earth were once in my lifetime to see you well-bred and accomplished in honesty and valor as well as in knowledge and civility. Ay, I have longed to leave you after my death as a mirror of your father's personality. The reflection may not prove perfect in practice, but certainly I could not more studiously wish for its perfection.

My late father Grangousier, of blessed memory, made every effort that I might achieve mental, moral and technical excellence. The fruit of my studies and labors matched, indeed surpassed, his dearest wish. But you can realize that conditions were not as favorable to learning as they are to-day. Nor had I such gifted teachers as you. We were still in the dark ages; we still walked in the shadow of the dark clouds of ignorance; we suffered the calamitous consequences of the destruction of good literature by the Goths. Now, by God's grace, light and dignity have been restored to letters, and I have lived to see it. Indeed, I have watched such a revolution in learning that I, not erroneously reputed in my manhood the leading scholar of the century, would find it difficult to enter the bottom class in a grammar school.

I tell you all this not through boastfulness, though in writing to you I might be proud with impunity. Does not Marcus Tullius<sup>33</sup> authorize it in his book *Of Old Age*, and Plutarch in *How a Man May Praise Himself without Envy*? Both authors recognize that such pride is useful in fostering the spirit of emulation. No—I do it simply to give you a proof of my love and affection.

To-day, the old sciences are revived, knowledge is systematized, discipline reestablished. The learned languages are restored: Greek, without which a man would be ashamed to consider himself educated; Hebrew, Chaldean and Latin.<sup>34</sup> Printing is now in use, an

33. Cicero.

34. The languages which are the in-

art so accurate and elegant that it betrays the divine inspiration of its discovery,<sup>35</sup> which I have lived to witness. Alas! Conversely, I was not spared the horror of such diabolic works as gunpowder<sup>36</sup> and artillery.

To-day, the world is full of learned men, brilliant teachers and vast libraries: I do not believe that the ages of Plato, Cicero or Papinian<sup>37</sup> afforded such facilities for culture. From now on, it is unthinkable to come before the public or move in polite circles without having worshipped at Minerva's shrine. Why, the robbers, hangmen, adventurers and jockeys of to-day are infinitely better educated than the doctors and preachers of my time. More, even women and girls aspire to the glory, the heavenly manna of learning. Thus, at my advanced age, I have been forced to take up Greek. Not that I had despised it, like Cato;<sup>38</sup> I never had the opportunity to learn it. Now I delight in reading Plutarch's *Morals*, Plato's noble *Dialogues*, the *Monuments* of Pausanias and the *Antiquities* of Athenæus,<sup>39</sup> as I await the hour when it shall please God, my Creator, to call me back to His bosom.

That is why, my dear son, I urge you to spend your youth making the most of your studies and developing your moral sense. You are in Paris, which abounds in noble men upon whom to pattern yourself; you have Epistemon, an admirable tutor, who can inspire you by direct oral teaching. But I demand more of you. I insist you learn languages perfectly! Greek first, as old Quintilian<sup>40</sup> prescribes; then Latin; then Hebrew for the sake of the Holy Scripture; then Chaldee and Arabic, too. Model your Greek style on Plato, your Latin on Cicero. Let no history slip your memory; cultivate cosmography, for you will find its texts helpful.

As for the liberal arts of geometry, arithmetic and music, I gave you a taste of them when you were a little lad of five or six. Proceed further in them yourself, learning as much as you can. Be sure to master all the rules of astronomy; but dismiss astrology and the divinatory art of Lullius<sup>41</sup> as but vanity and imposture. Of civil law, I would have you know the texts of the Code by heart, then compare them with philosophy.

A knowledge of nature is indispensable; devote yourself to this

struments of classical learning are listed along with those useful for the study of the Old Testament.

35. Printing from movable type was independently invented in Europe about the middle of the fifteenth century; the idea of its divine origin was commonplace during the Renaissance.

36. probably introduced into Europe through the Arabs, rather than invented, in the fourteenth century.

37. jurisconsult of the time of Emperor Septimius Severus (reigned 193-211 A.D.)

38. Plutarch's life of Cato is the source of the notion that he despised Greek.

39. The works of Pausanias and Athenæus were standard sources of information on ancient geography, art, and everyday life.

40. In his *Institutio oratoria*, Book I, Chapter 1, paragraph 12, he recommends studying Greek before Latin.

41. Raymond Lully, Spanish philosopher of the thirteenth century, who dabbled in magic.

study with unflagging curiosity. Let there be no sea, river or fountain but you know the fish that dwell in it. Be familiar with all the shrubs, bushes and trees in forest or orchard, all the plants, herbs and flowers that grow on the ground, all the birds of the air, all the metals in the bowels of earth, all the precious stones in the orient and the south. In a word, be well informed in everything that concerns the physical world we live in.

Then carefully consult the works of Greek, Arabian and Latin physicians, without slighting the Jewish doctors, Talmudists and Cabbalists. By frequent exercises in dissection, acquire a perfect knowledge of that other world, which is man.

Devote a few hours a day to the study of Holy Writ. Take up the New Testament and the Epistles in Greek; then, the Old Testament in Hebrew. Strive to make your mind an inexhaustible storehouse of knowledge. For you are growing to manhood now: soon you will have to give up your studious repose to lead a life of action. You will have to learn to bear arms, to achieve knighthood, so as to defend my house and help our allies frustrate the attacks of evildoers.

Further, I wish you soon to test what profit you have gained from your education. This you can best do by public discussion and debate on all subjects against all comers, and by frequenting learned men both in Paris and elsewhere.

But remember this. As Solomon says, wisdom entereth not into a malicious soul, and science without conscience spells but destruction of the spirit. Therefore serve, love and fear God, on Him pin all your thoughts and hopes; by faith built of charity, cling to Him so closely that never a sin come between you. Hold the abuses of the world in just suspicion. Set not your heart upon vanity, for this life is a transitory thing, but the Word of God endureth forever. Be serviceable to your neighbor, love him as you do yourself. Honor your teachers. Shun the company of all men you would not wish to resemble; receive not in vain the favors God has bestowed upon you.

When you realize that you have acquired all the knowledge Paris has to offer, come back so I may see you and give you my blessing before I die.

My son, the peace and grace of Our Lord be with you. Amen.

Your father,  
GARGANTUA

From Utopia, the seventeenth day of September.

Having read this letter, Pantagruel, greatly encouraged, strove more ardently than ever to profit in his work. Had you seen him studying vigorously, practically and tirelessly, you would have com-

pared his spirit moving among his books to flames blazing through a bonfire of dry branches.

## BENVENUTO CELLINI

(1500-1571)

Autobiography (*La vita di Benvenuto Cellini*)\*

[*World War*]†

The whole world was now in warfare.<sup>1</sup> Pope Clement had sent to get some troops from Giovanni de' Medici, and when they came, they made such disturbances in Rome, that it was ill living in open shops. On this account I retired to a good snug house behind the Banchi, where I worked for all the friends I had acquired. Since I produced few things of much importance at that period, I need not waste time in talking about them. I took much pleasure in music and amusements of the kind. On the death of Giovanni de' Medici in Lombardy, the Pope, at the advice of Messer Jacopo Salviati, dismissed the five bands he had engaged; and when the Constable of Bourbon<sup>2</sup> knew there were no troops in Rome, he pushed his army with the utmost energy up to the city. The whole of Rome upon this flew to arms. I happened to be intimate with Alessandro, the son of Piero del Bene, who, at the time when the Colonnese entered Rome, had requested me to guard his palace. On this more serious occasion, therefore, he prayed me to enlist fifty comrades for the protection of the said house, appointing me their captain, as I had been when the Colonnese<sup>3</sup> came. So I collected fifty young men of the highest courage, and we took up our quarters in his palace, with good pay and excellent appointments.

Bourbon's army had now arrived before the walls of Rome, and Alessandro begged me to go with him to reconnoitre. So we went with one of the stoutest fellows in our company; and on the way a youth called Cecchino della Casa joined himself to us. On reaching the walls by the Campo Santo, we could see that famous army, which was making every effort to enter the town. Upon the ram-

\* Written between 1558 and 1562. The selections reprinted here are from the translation by John Addington Symonds.

† Book I, Chapters 34-37.

1. The year is 1527; Benvenuto is now in Rome. The war between Charles V, the Holy Roman emperor, and the king of France, Francis I, which had been going on for six years, had important implications in Italy. A league of Italian states, including the Holy

See, at this point was backing Francis I. The invasion described in this selection is generally referred to as the sack of Rome.

2. a cousin of the king of France who had gone over to the opposite side. Benvenuto's statement, in the following paragraph, that it was he who killed the Constable is considered wholly unreliable.

3. the troops of the house of Colonna, the Pope's enemies.

parts where we took our station, several young men were lying killed by the besiegers; the battle raged there desperately, and there was the densest fog imaginable. I turned to Alessandro and said: "Let us go home as soon as we can, for there is nothing to be done here; you see the enemies are mounting, and our men are in flight." Alessandro, in a panic, cried: "Would God that we had never come here!" and turned in maddest haste to fly. I took him up somewhat sharply with these words: "Since you have brought me here, I must perform some action worthy of a man"; and directing my arquebuse where I saw the thickest and most serried troop of fighting men, I aimed exactly at one whom I remarked to be higher than the rest: the fog prevented me from being certain whether he was on horseback or on foot. Then I turned to Alessandro and Cecchino, and bade them discharge their arquebuses, showing them how to avoid being hit by the besiegers. When we had fired two rounds apiece, I crept cautiously up to the wall, and observing among the enemy a most extraordinary confusion, I discovered afterwards that one of our shots had killed the Constable of Bourbon; and from what I subsequently learned, he was the man whom I had first noticed above the heads of the rest.

Quitting our position on the ramparts, we crossed the Campo Santo, and entered the city of St. Peter's; then coming out exactly at the church of Santo Agnolo, we got with greatest difficulty to the great gate of the castle: for the generals Renzo di Ceri and Orazio Baglioni were wounding and slaughtering everybody who abandoned the defence of the walls. By the time we had reached the great gate, part of the foemen had already entered Rome, and we had them in our rear. The castellan had ordered the portcullis to be lowered, in order to do which they cleared a little space, and this enabled us four to get inside. On the instant that I entered, the captain Pallone de' Medici claimed me as being of the Papal household, and forced me to abandon Alessandro, which I had to do, much against my will. I ascended to the keep, and at the same instant Pope Clement came in through the corridors into the castle; he had refused to leave the palace of St. Peter earlier, being unable to believe that his enemies would effect their entrance into Rome. Having got into the castle in this way, I attached myself to certain pieces of artillery, which were under the command of a bombardier called Giuliano Fiorentino. Leaning there against the battlements, the unhappy man could see his poor house being sacked, and his wife and children outraged; fearing to strike his own folk, he dared not discharge the cannon, and flinging the burning fuse upon the ground, he wept as though his heart would break, and tore his cheeks with both his hands. Some of the other bombardiers were behaving in like manner; seeing which, I

took one of the matches, and got the assistance of a few men who were not overcome by their emotions. I aimed some swivels and falconets at points where I saw it would be useful, and killed with them a good number of the enemy. Had it not been for this, the troops who poured into Rome that morning, and were marching straight upon the castle, might possibly have entered it with ease, because the artillery was doing them no damage. I went on firing under the eyes of several cardinals and lords, who kept blessing me and giving me the heartiest encouragement. In my enthusiasm I strove to achieve the impossible; let it suffice that it was I who saved the castle that morning, and brought the other bombardiers back to their duty. I worked hard the whole of that day; and when the evening came, while the army was marching into Rome through the Trastevere, Pope Clement appointed a great Roman nobleman named Antonio Santacroce to be captain of all the gunners. The first thing this man did was to come to me, and having greeted me with the utmost kindness, he stationed me with five fine pieces of artillery on the highest point of the castle, to which the name of the Angel<sup>4</sup> specially belongs. This circular eminence goes round the castle, and surveys both Prati and the town of Rome. The captain put under my orders enough men to help in managing my guns, and having seen me paid in advance, he gave me rations of bread and a little wine, and begged me to go forward as I had begun. I was perhaps more inclined by nature to the profession of arms than to the one I had adopted, and I took such pleasure in its duties that I discharged them better than those of my own art. Night came, the enemy had entered Rome, and we who were in the castle (especially myself, who have always taken pleasure in extraordinary sights) stayed gazing on the indescribable scene of tumult and conflagration in the streets below. People who were anywhere else but where we were, could not have formed the least imagination of what it was. I will not, however, set myself to describe that tragedy, but will content myself with continuing the history of my own life and the circumstances which properly belong to it.

During the course of my artillery practice, which I never intermitted through the whole month passed by us beleaguered in the castle, I met with a great many very striking accidents, all of them worthy to be related. But since I do not care to be too prolix, or to exhibit myself outside the sphere of my profession, I will omit the larger part of them, only touching upon those I cannot well neglect, which shall be the fewest in number and the most remarkable. The first which comes to hand is this: Messer Antonio Santacroce had made me come down from the Angel, in order to fire on some houses in the neighbourhood, where certain of our besiegers had

4. from the marble angel on top of the castle.

been seen to enter. While I was firing, a cannon shot reached me, which hit the angle of a battlement, and carried off enough of it to be the cause why I sustained no injury. The whole mass struck me in the chest and took my breath away. I lay stretched upon the ground like a dead man, and could hear what the bystanders were saying. Among them all, Messer Antonio Santacroce lamented greatly, exclaiming: "Alas, alas! we have lost the best defender that we had." Attracted by the uproar, one of my comrades ran up; he was called Gianfrancesco, and was a bandsman, but was far more naturally given to medicine than to music. On the spot he flew off, crying for a stoop of the very best Greek wine. Then he made a tile red-hot, and cast upon it a good handful of wormwood; after which he sprinkled the Greek wine; and when the wormwood was well soaked, he laid it on my breast, just where the bruise was visible to all. Such was the virtue of the wormwood that I immediately regained my scattered faculties. I wanted to begin to speak, but could not; for some stupid soldiers had filled my mouth with earth, imagining that by so doing they were giving me the sacrament; and indeed they were more like to have excommunicated me, since I could with difficulty come to myself again, the earth doing me more mischief than the blow. However, I escaped that danger, and returned to the rage and fury of the guns, pursuing my work there with all the ability and eagerness that I could summon.

Pope Clement, by this, had sent to demand assistance from the Duke of Urbino, who was with the troops of Venice; he commissioned the envoy to tell his Excellency that the Castle of St. Angelo would send up every evening three beacons from its summit, accompanied by three discharges of the cannon thrice repeated, and that so long as this signal was continued, he might take for granted that the castle had not yielded. I was charged with lighting the beacons and firing the guns for this purpose; and all this while I pointed my artillery by day upon the places where mischief could be done. The Pope, in consequence, began to regard me with still greater favour, because he saw that I discharged my functions as intelligently as the task demanded. Aid from the Duke of Urbino never came; on which, as it is not my business, I will make no further comment.

While I was at work upon that diabolical task of mine, there came from time to time to watch me some of the cardinals who were invested in the castle; and most frequently the Cardinal of Ravenna and the Cardinal de' Gaddi. I often told them not to show themselves, since their nasty red caps gave a fair mark to our enemies. From neighbouring buildings, such as the Torre de' Bini, we ran great peril when they were there; and at last I had them locked off, and gained thereby their deep ill-will. I frequently received visits



also from the general, Orazio Baglioni, who was very well affected toward me. One day while he was talking with me, he noticed something going forward in a drinking-place outside the Porta di Castello, which bore the name of Baccanello. This tavern had for a sign a sun painted between two windows, of a bright red colour. The windows being closed, Signor Orazio concluded that a band of soldiers were carousing at table just between them and behind the sun. So he said to me: "Benvenuto, if you think that you could hit that wall an ell's breadth from the sun with your demi-cannon here, I believe you would be doing a good stroke of business, for there is a great commotion there, and men of much importance must probably be inside the house." I answered that I felt quite capable of hitting the sun in its centre, but that a barrel full of stones, which was standing close to the muzzle of the gun, might be knocked down by the shock of the discharge and the blast of the artillery. He rejoined: "Don't waste time, Benvenuto. In the first place, it is not possible, where it is standing, that the cannon's blast should bring it down; and even if it were to fall, and the Pope himself was underneath, the mischief would not be so great as you imagine. Fire, then, only fire!" Taking no more thought about it, I struck the sun in the centre, exactly as I said I should. The cask was dislodged, as I predicted, and fell precisely between Cardinal Farnese<sup>5</sup> and Messer Jacopo Salviati. It might very well have dashed out the brains of both of them, except that just at that very moment Farnese was reproaching Salviati with having caused the sack of Rome, and while they stood apart from one another to exchange opprobrious remarks, my gabion fell without destroying them. When he heard the uproar in the court below, good Signor Orazio dashed off in a hurry; and I, thrusting my neck forward where the cask had fallen, heard some people saying: "It would not be a bad job to kill that gunner!" Upon this I turned two falconets toward the staircase, with mind resolved to let blaze on the first man who attempted to come up. The household of Cardinal Farnese must have received orders to go and do me some injury; accordingly I prepared to receive them, with a lighted match in hand. Recognising some who were approaching, I called out: "You lazy lubbers, if you don't pack off from there, and if but a man's child among you dares to touch the staircase, I have got two cannon loaded, which will blow you into powder. Go and tell the Cardinal that I was acting at the order of superior officers, and that what we have done and are doing is in defence of them priests, and not to hurt them." They made away; and then came Signor Orazio Baglioni, running. I bade him stand back, else I'd murder him; for I knew very well who he was. He drew back a little, not without a certain show of fear, and called

5. already high in the Vatican hierarchy, later to become Pope Paul III.

out: "Benvenuto, I am your friend!" To this I answered: "Sir, come up, but come alone, and then come as you like." The general, who was a man of mighty pride, stood still a moment, and then said angrily: "I have a good mind not to come up again, and to do quite the opposite of that which I intended toward you." I replied that just as I was put there to defend my neighbours, I was equally well able to defend myself too. He said that he was coming alone; and when he arrived at the top of the stairs, his features were more discomposed than I thought reasonable. So I kept my hand upon my sword, and stood eyeing him askance. Upon this he began to laugh, and the colour coming back into his face, he said to me with the most pleasant manner: "Friend Benvenuto, I bear you as great love as I have in my heart to give; and in God's good time I will render you proof of this. Would to God that you had killed those two rascals; for one of them is the cause of all this trouble, and the day perchance will come when the other will be found the cause of something even worse." He then begged me, if I should be asked, not to say that he was with me when I fired the gun; and for the rest bade me be of good cheer. The commotion which the affair made was enormous, and lasted a long while. However, I will not enlarge upon it further, only adding that I was within an inch of revenging my father on Messer Jacopo Salviati, who had grievously injured him, according to my father's frequent complaints.<sup>6</sup> As it was, unwittingly I gave the fellow a great fright. Of Farnese I shall say nothing here, because it will appear in its proper place how well it would have been if I had killed him.

I pursued my business of artilleryman, and every day performed some extraordinary feat, whereby the credit and the favour I acquired with the Pope was something indescribable. There never passed a day but what I killed one or another of our enemies in the besieging army. On one occasion the Pope was walking round the circular keep, when he observed a Spanish Colonel in the Prati; he recognised the man by certain indications, seeing that this officer had formerly been in his service; and while he fixed his eyes on him, he kept talking about him. I, above by the Angel, knew nothing of all this, but spied a fellow down there, busying himself about the trenches with a javelin in his hand; he was dressed entirely in rose-colour; and so, studying the worst that I could do against him, I selected a gerfalcon which I had at hand; it is a piece of ordnance larger and longer than a swivel, and about the size of a demi-culverin. This I emptied, and loaded it again with a good charge of fine powder mixed with the coarser sort; then I aimed it exactly at the man in red, elevating prodigiously, because a piece of that

6. Benvenuto has a grudge against Salviati for depriving his father of his position with the Medici.

calibre could hardly be expected to carry true at such a distance. I fired, and hit my man exactly in the middle. He had trussed his sword in front, for swagger, after a way those Spaniards have; and my ball, when it struck him, broke upon the blade, and one could see the fellow cut in two fair halves. The Pope, who was expecting nothing of this kind, derived great pleasure and amazement from the sight, both because it seemed to him impossible that one should aim and hit the mark at such a distance, and also because the man was cut in two, and he could not comprehend how this should happen. He sent for me, and asked about it. I explained all the devices I had used in firing; but told him that why the man was cut in halves, neither he nor I could know. Upon my bended knees I then besought him to give me the pardon of his blessing for that homicide; and for all the others I had committed in the castle in the service of the Church. Thereat the Pope, raising his hand, and making a large open sign of the cross upon my face, told me that he blessed me, and that he gave me pardon for all murders I had ever perpetrated, or should ever perpetrate, in the service of the Apostolic Church. When I left him, I went aloft, and never stayed from firing to the utmost of my power; and few were the shots of mine that missed their mark. My drawing, and my fine studies in my craft, and my charming art of music, all were swallowed up in the din of that artillery; and if I were to relate in detail all the splendid things I did in that infernal work of cruelty, I should make the world stand by and wonder. But, not to be too prolix, I will pass them over. Only I must tell a few of the most remarkable, which are, as it were, forced in upon me.

To begin then: pondering day and night what I could render for my own part in defence of Holy Church, and having noticed that the enemy changed guard and marched past through the great gate of Santo Spirito, which was within a reasonable range, I thereupon directed my attention to that spot; but, having to shoot sideways, I could not do the damage that I wished, although I killed a fair percentage every day. This induced our adversaries, when they saw their passage covered by my guns, to load the roof of a certain house one night with thirty gabions, which obstructed the view I formerly enjoyed. Taking better thought than I had done of the whole situation, I now turned all my five pieces of artillery directly on the gabions, and waited till the evening hour, when they changed guard. Our enemies, thinking they were safe, came on at greater ease and in a closer body than usual; whereupon I set fire to my blow-pipes.<sup>7</sup> Not merely did I dash to pieces the gabions which stood in my way; but, what was better, by that one blast I slaughtered more than thirty men. In consequence of this manœuvre, which I repeated

7. artillery pieces in general.

twice, the soldiers were thrown into such disorder, that being, moreover, encumbered with the spoils of that great sack, and some of them desirous of enjoying the fruits of their labour, they oftentimes showed a mind to mutiny and take themselves away from Rome. However, after coming to terms with their valiant captain, Gian di Urbino, they were ultimately compelled, at their excessive inconvenience, to take another road when they changed guard. It cost them three miles of march, whereas before they had but half a mile. Having achieved this feat, I was entreated with prodigious favours by all the men of quality who were invested in the castle. This incident was so important that I thought it well to relate it, before finishing the history of things outside my art, the which is the real object of my writing: forsooth, if I wanted to ornament my biography with such matters, I should have far too much to tell.

["Men Like Benvenuto . . . Stand Above the Law"]\*

. . . The Pope<sup>8</sup> was taken ill, and his physicians thought the case was dangerous. Accordingly my enemy<sup>9</sup> began to be afraid of me, and engaged some Neapolitan soldiers to do to me what he was dreading I might do to him. I had therefore much trouble to defend my poor life. In course of time, however, I completed the reverse; and when I took it to the Pope, I found him in bed in a most deplorable condition. Nevertheless, he received me with the greatest kindness, and wished to inspect the medals and the dies. He sent for spectacles and lights, but was unable to see anything clearly. Then he began to fumble with his fingers at them, and having felt them a short while, he fetched a deep sigh, and said to his attendants that he was much concerned about me, but that if God gave him back his health he would make it all right.

Three days afterwards the Pope died, and I was left with all my labour lost; yet I plucked up courage, and told myself that these medals had won me so much celebrity, that any Pope who was elected would give me work to do, and peradventure bring me better fortune. Thus I encouraged and put heart into myself, and buried in oblivion all the injuries which Pompeo had done me. Then putting on my arms and girding my sword, I went to San Piero, and kissed the feet of the dead Pope, not without shedding tears. Afterwards I returned to the Banchi to look on at the great commotion which always happens on such occasions.

While I was sitting in the street with several of my friends, Pompeo went by, attended by ten men very well armed; and when he came just opposite, he stopped, as though about to pick a quar-

\* From Book I, Chapters 72-74.

8. still Clement VII. The year is 1534.

9. Benvenuto's great enemy and rival

is Pompeo de' Capitaneis, a jeweler from Milan who tried several times, and with some success, to ruin his position with the Pope.

rel with myself. My companions, brave and adventurous young men, made signs to me to draw my sword; but it flashed through my mind that if I drew, some terrible mischief might result for persons who were wholly innocent. Therefore I considered that it would be better if I put my life to risk alone. When Pompeo had stood there time enough to say two Ave Marias, he laughed derisively in my direction; and going off, his fellows also laughed and wagged their heads, with many other insolent gestures. My companions wanted to begin the fray at once; but I told them hotly that I was quite able to conduct my quarrels to an end by myself, and that I had no need of stouter fighters than I was; so that each of them might mind his business. My friends were angry and went off muttering. Now there was among them my dearest comrade, named Albertaccio del Bene, own brother to Alessandro and Albizzo, who is now a very rich man in Lyons. He was the most redoubtable young man I ever knew, and the most high-spirited, and loved me like himself; and insomuch as he was well aware that my forbearance had not been inspired by want of courage, but by the most daring bravery, for he knew me down to the bottom of my nature, he took my words up and begged me to favour him so far as to associate him with myself in all I meant to do. I replied: "Dear Albertaccio, dearest to me above all men that live, the time will very likely come when you shall give me aid; but in this case, if you love me, do not attend to me, but look to your own business, and go at once like our other friends, for now there is no time to lose." These words were spoken in one breath.

In the meanwhile my enemies had proceeded slowly toward Chiavica, as the place was called, and had arrived at the crossing of several roads, going in different directions; but the street in which Pompeo's house stood was the one which leads straight to the Campo di Fiore. Some business or other made him enter the apothecary's shop which stood at the corner of Chiavica, and there he stayed a while transacting it. I had just been told that he had boasted of the insult which he fancied he had put upon me; but be that as it may, it was to his misfortune; for precisely when I came up to the corner, he was leaving the shop, and his bravi had opened their ranks and received him in their midst. I drew a little dagger with a sharpened edge, and breaking the line of his defenders, laid my hands upon his breast so quickly and coolly, that none of them were able to prevent me. Then I aimed to strike him in the face; but fright made him turn his head round; and I stabbed him just beneath the ear. I only gave two blows, for he fell stone dead at the second. I had not meant to kill him; but as the saying goes, knocks are not dealt by measure. With my left hand I plucked back the dagger, and with my right hand drew my sword to defend my life.

However, all those bravi ran up to the corpse and took no action against me; so I went back alone through Strada Giulia, considering how best to put myself in safety.

I had walked about three hundred paces, when Piloto the goldsmith, my very good friend, came up and said: "Brother, now that the mischief's done, we must see to saving you." I replied: "Let us go to Albertaccio del Bene's house; it is only a few minutes since I told him I should soon have need of him." When we arrived there, Albertaccio and I embraced with measureless affection; and soon the whole flower of the young men of the Banchi, of all nations except the Milanese,<sup>10</sup> came crowding in; and each and all made proffer of their own life to save mine. Messer Luigi Rucellai also sent with marvellous promptitude and courtesy to put his services at my disposal, as did many other great folk of his station; for they all agreed in blessing my hands, judging that Pompeo had done me too great and unforgivable an injury, and marvelling that I had put up with him so long.

Cardinal Cornaro, on hearing of the affair, despatched thirty soldiers, with as many partisans, pikes, and arquebuses, to bring me with all due respect to his quarters. This he did unasked; whereupon I accepted the invitation, and went off with them, while more than as many of the young men bore me company. Meanwhile, Messer Traiano, Pompeo's relative and first chamberlain to the Pope, sent a Milanese of high rank to Cardinal de' Medici, giving him news of the great crime I had committed, and calling on his most reverend lordship to chastise me. The Cardinal retorted on the spot: "His crime would indeed have been great if he had not committed this lesser one; thank Messer Traiano from me for giving me this information of a fact of which I had not heard before." Then he turned and in presence of the nobleman said to the Bishop of Frullì, his gentleman and intimate acquaintance: "Search diligently after my friend Benvenuto; I want to help and defend him; and whoso acts against him acts against myself." The Milanese nobleman went back, much disconcerted, while the Bishop of Frullì came to visit me at Cardinal Cornaro's palace. Presenting himself to the Cardinal, he related how Cardinal de' Medici had sent for Benvenuto, and wanted to be his protector. Now Cardinal Cornaro, who had the touchy temper of a bear, flew into a rage, and told the Bishop he was quite as well able to defend me as Cardinal de' Medici. The Bishop, in reply, entreated to be allowed to speak with me on some matters of his patron which had nothing to do with the affair. Cornaro bade him for that day make as though he had already talked with me.

Cardinal de' Medici was very angry. However, I went the follow-

10. men from all the states of Italy except Pompeo's own.

ing night, without Cornaro's knowledge, and under good escort, to pay him my respects. Then I begged him to grant me the favour of leaving me where I was, and told him of the great courtesy which Cornaro had shown me; adding that if his most reverend lordship suffered me to stay, I should gain one friend the more in my hour of need; otherwise his lordship might dispose of me exactly as he thought best. He told me to do as I liked; so I returned to Cornaro's palace, and a few days afterwards the Cardinal Farnese was elected Pope.

After he had put affairs of greater consequence in order, the new Pope sent for me, saying that he did not wish any one else to strike his coins. To these words of his Holiness a gentleman very privately acquainted with him, named Messer Latino Juvinale, made answer that I was in hiding for a murder committed on the person of one Pompeo of Milan, and set forth what could be argued for my justification in the most favourable terms. The Pope replied: "I knew nothing of Pompeo's death, but plenty of Benvenuto's provocation; so let a safe-conduct be at once made out for him, in order that he may be placed in perfect security." A great friend of Pompeo's, who was also intimate with the Pope, happened to be there; he was a Milanese, called Messer Ambrogio. This man said: "In the first days of your papacy it were not well to grant pardons of this kind." The Pope turned to him and answered: "You know less about such matters than I do. Know then that men like Benvenuto, unique in their profession, stand above the law; and how far more he, then, who received the provocation I have heard of?" When my safe-conduct had been drawn out, I began at once to serve him, and was treated with the utmost favour.

[*"I . . . Grew Somewhat Glorious"*]\*

It happened on one feast-day that I went to the palace after dinner, and when I reached the clockroom, I saw the door of the wardrobe standing open. As I drew nigh it, the Duke<sup>11</sup> called me, and after a friendly greeting said: "You are welcome! Look at that box which has been sent me by my lord Stefano of Palestrina. Open it, and let us see what it contains." When I had opened the box, I cried to the Duke: "My lord, this is a statue in Greek marble, and it is a miracle of beauty. I must say that I have never seen a boy's figure so excellently wrought and in so fine a style among all the antiques I have inspected. If your Excellency permits, I should like to restore it—head and arms and feet. I will add an eagle, in order that we may christen the lad Ganymede. It is certainly not my business to patch up statues, that being the trade of botchers,

\* From Book II, Chapters 69–78.

11. Cosimo de' Medici, the grand

duke of Tuscany. Benvenuto now works for him in Florence.

who do it in all conscience villainously ill; yet the art displayed by this great master of antiquity cries out to me to help him." The Duke was highly delighted to find the statue so beautiful, and put me a multitude of questions, saying: "Tell me, Benvenuto, minutely, in what consists the skill of this old master, which so excites your admiration." I then attempted, as well as I was able, to explain the beauty of workmanship, the consummate science, and the rare manner displayed by the fragment. I spoke long upon these topics, and with the greater pleasure because I saw that his Excellency was deeply interested.

While I was thus pleasantly engaged in entertaining the Duke, a page happened to leave the wardrobe, and at the same moment Bandinello<sup>12</sup> entered. When the Duke saw him, his countenance contracted, and he asked him drily: "What are you about here?" Bandinello, without answering, cast a glance upon the box, where the statue lay uncovered. Then breaking into one of his malignant laughs and wagging his head, he turned to the Duke and said: "My lord, this exactly illustrates the truth of what I have so often told your Excellency. You must know that the ancients were wholly ignorant of anatomy, and therefore their works abound in mistakes." I kept silence, and paid no heed to what he was saying; nay, indeed, I had turned my back on him. But when the brute had brought his disagreeable babble to an end, the Duke exclaimed: "O Benvenuto, this is the exact opposite of what you were just now demonstrating with so many excellent arguments. Come and speak a word in defence of the statue." In reply to this appeal, so kindly made me by the Duke, I spoke as follows: "My lord, your most illustrious Excellency must please to know that Baccio Bandinello is made up of everything bad, and thus has he ever been; therefore, whatever he looks at, be the thing superlatively excellent, becomes in his ungracious eyes as bad as can be. I, who incline to the good only, discern the truth with purer senses. Consequently, what I told your Excellency about this lovely statue is mere simple truth; whereas what Bandinello said is but a portion of the evil out of which he is composed." The Duke listened with much amusement; but Bandinello writhed and made the most ugly faces—his face itself being by nature hideous beyond measure—which could be imagined by the mind of man.

The Duke at this point moved away, and proceeded through some ground-floor rooms, while Bandinello followed. The chamberlains twitched me by the mantle, and sent me after; so we all attended the Duke until he reached a certain chamber, where he seated himself, with Bandinello and me standing at his right hand and his left. I kept silence, and the gentlemen of his Excellency's

12. a mediocre artist, Cellini's rival.



suite looked hard at Bandinello, tittering among themselves about the speech I had made in the room above. So then Bandinello began again to chatter, and cried out: "Prince, when I uncovered my Hercules and Cacus,<sup>13</sup> I verily believe a hundred sonnets were written on me, full of the worst abuse which could be invented by the ignorant rabble." I rejoined: "Prince, when Michel Angelo Buonarroti displayed his Sacristy<sup>14</sup> to view, with so many fine statues in it, the men of talent in our admirable school of Florence, always appreciative of truth and goodness, published more than a hundred sonnets, each vying with his neighbour to extol these masterpieces to the skies. So then, just as Bandinello's work deserved all the evil which, he tells us, was then said about it, Buonarroti's deserved the enthusiastic praise which was bestowed upon it." These words of mine made Bandinello burst with fury; he turned on me, and cried: "And you, what have you got to say against my work?" "I will tell you if you have the patience to hear me out." "Go along then," he replied. The Duke and his attendants prepared themselves to listen. I began and opened my oration thus: "You must know that it pains me to point out the faults of your statue; I shall not, however, utter my own sentiments, but shall recapitulate what our most virtuous school of Florence says about it." The brutal fellow kept making disagreeable remarks and gesticulating with his hands and feet, until he enraged me so that I began again, and spoke far more rudely than I should otherwise have done, if he had behaved with decency. "Well, then, this virtuous school says that if one were to shave the hair of your Hercules, there would not be skull enough left to hold his brain; it says that it is impossible to distinguish whether his features are those of a man or of something between a lion and an ox; the face too is turned away from the action of the figure, and is so badly set upon the neck, with such poverty of art and so ill a grace, that nothing worse was ever seen; his sprawling shoulders are like the two pommels of an ass's packsaddle; his breasts and all the muscles of the body are not portrayed from a man, but from a big sack full of melons set upright against a wall. The loins seem to be modelled from a bag of lanky pumpkins; nobody can tell how his two legs are attached to that vile trunk; it is impossible to say on which leg he stands, or which he uses to exert his strength; nor does he seem to be resting upon both, as sculptors who know something of their art have occasionally set the figure. It is obvious that the body is leaning forward more than one-third of a cubit, which alone is the greatest and most insupportable fault committed by vulgar commonplace pretenders. Concerning the arms, they say that these are

13. a marble group, still in the Piazza della Signoria in Florence.

14. the sacristy of San Lorenzo, with the Medici tombs; commonly referred to as the Medici chapel.

both stretched out without one touch of grace or one real spark of artistic talents, just as if you had never seen a naked model. Again, the right leg of Hercules and that of Cacus have got one mass of flesh between them, so that if they were to be separated, not only one of them, but both together, would be left without a calf at the point where they are touching. They say, too, that Hercules has one of his feet underground, while the other seems to be resting on hot coals."

The fellow could not stand quiet to hear the damning errors of his Cacus in their turn enumerated. For one thing, I was telling the truth; for another, I was unmasking him to the Duke and all the people present, who showed by face and gesture first their surprise, and next their conviction that what I said was true. All at once he burst out: "Ah, you slanderous tongue! why don't you speak about my design?" I retorted: "A good draughtsman can never produce bad works; therefore I am inclined to believe that your drawing is no better than your statues." When he saw the amused expression on the Duke's face and the cutting gestures of the bystanders, he let his insolence get the better of him, and turned to me with that most hideous face of his, screaming aloud: "Oh, hold your tongue, you ugly sodomite." At these words the Duke frowned, and the others pursed their lips up and looked with knitted brows toward him. The horrible affront half maddened me with fury; but in a moment I recovered presence of mind enough to turn it off with a jest: "You madman! you exceed the bounds of decency. Yet would to God that I understood so noble an art as you allude to; they say that Jove used it with Ganymede in paradise, and here upon this earth it is practised by some of the greatest emperors and kings. I, however, am but a poor humble creature, who neither have the power nor the intelligence to perplex my wits with anything so admirable." When I had finished this speech, the Duke and his attendants could control themselves no longer, but broke into such shouts of laughter that one never heard the like. You must know, gentle readers, that though I put on this appearance of pleasantry, my heart was bursting in my body to think that a fellow, the foulest villain who ever breathed, should have dared in the presence of so great a prince to cast an insult of that atrocious nature in my teeth; but you must also know that he insulted the Duke, and not me; for had I not stood in that august presence, I should have felled him dead to earth. When the dirty stupid scoundrel observed that those gentlemen kept on laughing, he tried to change the subject, and divert them from deriding him; so he began as follows: "This fellow Benvenuto goes about boasting that I have promised him a piece of marble." I took him up at once. "What! did you not send to tell me by your journeyman, Francesco, that if I wished to work

in marble you would give me a block? I accepted it, and mean to have it." He retorted: "Be very well assured that you will never get it." Still smarting as I was under the calumnious insults he had flung at me, I lost my self-control, forgot I was in the presence of the Duke, and called out in a storm of fury: "I swear to you that if you do not send the marble to my house, you had better look out for another world, for if you stay upon this earth I will most certainly rip the wind out of your carcass." Then suddenly awaking to the fact that I was standing in the presence of so great a duke, I turned submissively to his Excellency and said: "My lord, one fool makes a hundred; the follies of this man have blinded me for a moment to the glory of your most illustrious Excellency and to myself. I humbly crave your pardon." Then the Duke said to Bandinello: "Is it true that you promised him the marble?" He replied that it was true. Upon this the Duke addressed me: "Go to the Opera,<sup>15</sup> and choose a piece according to your taste." I demurred that the man had promised to send it home to me. The words that passed between us were awful, and I refused to take the stone in any other way. Next morning a piece of marble was brought to my house. On asking who had sent it, they told me it was Bandinello, and that this was the very block which he had promised.

I had it brought at once into my studio, and began to chisel it. While I was rough-hewing the block, I made a model. But my eagerness to work in marble was so strong, that I had not patience to finish the model as correctly as this art demands. I soon noticed that the stone rang false beneath my strokes, which made me oftentimes repent commencing on it. Yet I got what I could out of the piece—that is, the Apollo and Hyacinth, which may still be seen unfinished in my workshop. While I was thus engaged, the Duke came to my house, and often said to me: "Leave your bronze awhile, and let me watch you working on the marble." Then I took chisel and mallet, and went at it blithely. He asked about the model I had made for my statue; to which I answered: "Duke, this marble is all cracked, but I shall carve something from it in spite of that; therefore I have not been able to settle the model, but shall go on doing the best I can."

His Excellency sent to Rome post-haste for a block of Greek marble, in order that I might restore his antique Ganymede, which was the cause of that dispute with Bandinello. When it arrived, I thought it a sin to cut it up for the head and arms and other bits wanting in the Ganymede; so I provided myself with another piece of stone, and reserved the Greek marble for a Narcissus which I modelled on a small scale in wax. I found that the block had two

15. the workshop annexed to the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore.

holes, penetrating to the depth of a quarter of a cubit, and two good inches wide. This led me to choose the attitude which may be noticed in my statue, avoiding the holes and keeping my figure free from them. But rain had fallen scores of years upon the stone, filtering so deeply from the holes into its substance that the marble was decayed. Of this I had full proof at the time of a great inundation of the Arno, when the river rose to the height of more than a cubit and a half in my workshop. Now the Narcissus stood upon a square of wood, and the water overturned it, causing the statue to break in two above the breasts. I had to join the pieces; and in order that the line of breakage might not be observed, I wreathed that garland of flowers round it which may still be seen upon the bosom. I went on working at the surface, employing some hours before sunrise, or now and then on feast-days, so as not to lose the time I needed for my Perseus.<sup>16</sup>

It so happened on one of those mornings, while I was getting some little chisels into trim to work on the Narcissus, that a very fine splinter of steel flew into my right eye, and embedded itself so deeply in the pupil that it could not be extracted. I thought for certain I must lose the sight of that eye. After some days I sent for Maestro Raffaello de' Pilli, the surgeon, who obtained a couple of live pigeons, and placing me upon my back across a table, took the birds and opened a large vein they have beneath the wing, so that the blood gushed out into my eye. I felt immediately relieved, and in the space of two days the splinter came away, and I remained with eyesight greatly improved. Against the feast of S. Lucia,<sup>17</sup> which came round in three days, I made a golden eye out of a French crown, and had it presented at her shrine by one of my six nieces, daughters of my sister Liperata; the girl was ten years of age, and in her company I returned thanks to God and S. Lucia. For some while afterwards I did not work at the Narcissus, but pushed my Perseus forward under all the difficulties I have described. It was my purpose to finish it, and then to bid farewell to Florence.

Having succeeded so well with the cast of the Medusa, I had great hope of bringing my Perseus through; for I had laid the wax on, and felt confident that it would come out in bronze as perfectly as the Medusa. The waxen model produced so fine an effect, that when the Duke saw it and was struck with its beauty—whether somebody had persuaded him it could not be carried out with the same finish in metal, or whether he thought so for himself—he came to visit me more frequently than usual, and on one occasion said: "Benvenuto, this figure cannot succeed in bronze; the laws of

16. the statue of Perseus holding the head of Medusa, commissioned by

Duke Cosimo as a symbol of victory.  
17. patroness of eyesight.

art do not admit of it." These words of his Excellency stung me so sharply that I answered: "My lord, I know how very little confidence you have in me; and I believe the reason of this is that your most illustrious Excellency lends too ready an ear to my calumniators, or else indeed that you do not understand my art." He hardly let me close the sentence when he broke in: "I profess myself a connoisseur, and understand it very well indeed." I replied: "Yes, like a prince, not like an artist; for if your Excellency understood my trade as well as you imagine, you would trust me on the proofs I have already given. These are, first, the colossal bronze bust of your Excellency, which is now in Elba; secondly, the restoration of the Ganymede in marble, which offered so many difficulties and cost me so much trouble, that I would rather have made the whole statue new from the beginning; thirdly, the Medusa, cast by me in bronze, here now before your Excellency's eyes, the execution of which was a greater triumph of strength and skill than any of my predecessors in this fiendish art have yet achieved. Look you, my lord! I constructed that furnace anew on principles quite different from those of other founders; in addition to many technical improvements and ingenious devices, I supplied it with two issues for the metal, because this difficult and twisted figure could not otherwise have come out perfect. It is only owing to my intelligent insight into means and appliances that the statue turned out as it did; a triumph judged impossible by all the practitioners of this art. I should like you furthermore to be aware, my lord, for certain, that the sole reason why I succeeded with all those great and arduous works in France, under his most admirable Majesty King Francis, was the high courage which that good monarch put into my heart by the liberal allowances he made me, and the multitude of work-people he left at my disposal. I could have as many as I asked for, and employed at times above forty, all chosen by myself. These were the causes of my having there produced so many masterpieces in so short a space of time. Now then, my lord, put trust in me; supply me with the aid I need. I am confident of being able to complete a work which will delight your soul. But if your Excellency goes on disheartening me, and does not advance me the assistance which is absolutely required, neither I nor any man alive upon this earth can hope to achieve the slightest thing of value."

It was as much as the Duke could do to stand by and listen to my pleadings. He kept turning first this way and then that; while I, in despair, poor wretched I, was calling up remembrance of the noble state I held in France, to the great sorrow of my soul. All at once he cried: "Come, tell me, Benvenuto, how is it possible that yonder splendid head of Medusa, so high up there in the grasp of

Perseus, should ever come out perfect?" I replied upon the instant: "Look you now, my lord! If your Excellency possessed that knowledge of the craft which you affirm you have, you would not fear one moment for the splendid head you speak of. There is good reason, on the other hand, to feel uneasy about this right foot, so far below and at a distance from the rest." When he heard these words, the Duke turned, half in anger, to some gentlemen in waiting, and exclaimed: "I verily believe that this Benvenuto prides himself on contradicting everything one says." Then he faced round to me with a touch of mockery, upon which his attendants did the like, and began to speak as follows: "I will listen patiently to any argument you can possibly produce in explanation of your statement, which may convince me of its probability." I said in answer: "I will adduce so sound an argument that your Excellency shall perceive the full force of it." So I began: "You must know, my lord, that the nature of fire is to ascend, and therefore I promise you that Medusa's head will come out famously; but since it is not in the nature of fire to descend, and I must force it downwards six cubits<sup>18</sup> by artificial means, I assure your Excellency upon this most convincing ground of proof that the foot cannot possibly come out. It will, however, be quite easy for me to restore it." "Why, then," said the Duke, "did you not devise it so that the foot should come out as well as you affirm the head will?" I answered: "I must have made a much larger furnace, with a conduit as thick as my leg; and so I might have forced the molten metal by its own weight to descend so far. Now, my pipe, which runs six cubits to the statue's foot, as I have said, is not thicker than two fingers. However, it was not worth the trouble and expense to make a larger; for I shall easily be able to mend what is lacking. But when my mould is more than half full, as I expect, from this middle point upwards, the fire ascending by its natural property, then the heads of Perseus and Medusa will come out admirably; you may be quite sure of it." After I had thus expounded these convincing arguments, together with many more of the same kind, which it would be tedious to set down here, the Duke shook his head and departed without further ceremony.

Abandoned thus to my own resources, I took new courage, and banished the sad thoughts which kept recurring to my mind, making me often weep bitter tears of repentance for having left France; for though I did so only to revisit Florence, my sweet birthplace, in order that I might charitably succour my six nieces, this good action, as I well perceived, had been the beginning of my great misfortune. Nevertheless, I felt convinced that when my Perseus

18. A *cubit* is a measure of length equaling a foot and a half.

was accomplished, all these trials would be turned to high felicity and glorious well-being.

Accordingly I strengthened my heart, and with all the forces of my body and my purse, employing what little money still remained to me, I set to work. First I provided myself with several loads of pinewood from the forests of Serristori, in the neighbourhood of Montelupo. While these were on their way, I clothed my Perseus with the clay which I had prepared many months beforehand, in order that it might be duly seasoned. After making its clay tunic (for that is the term used in this art) and properly arming it and fencing it with iron girders, I began to draw the wax out by means of a slow fire. This melted and issued through numerous air-vents I had made; for the more there are of these, the better will the mould fill. When I had finished drawing off the wax, I constructed a funnel-shaped furnace all round the model of my Perseus. It was built of bricks, so interlaced, the one above the other, that numerous apertures were left for the fire to exhale at. Then I began to lay on wood by degrees, and kept it burning two whole days and nights. At length, when all the wax was gone, and the mould was well baked, I set to work at digging the pit in which to sink it. This I performed with scrupulous regard to all the rules of art. When I had finished that part of my work, I raised the mould by windlasses and stout ropes to a perpendicular position, and suspending it with the greatest care one cubit above the level of the furnace, so that it hung exactly above the middle of the pit, I next lowered it gently down into the very bottom of the furnace, and had it firmly placed with every possible precaution for its safety. When this delicate operation was accomplished, I began to bank it up with the earth I had excavated; and, ever as the earth grew higher, I introduced its proper air-vents, which were little tubes of earthenware, such as folk use for drains and such-like purposes. At length, I felt sure that it was admirably fixed, and that the filling-in of the pit and the placing of the air-vents had been properly performed. I also could see that my work-people understood my method, which differed very considerably from that of all the other masters in the trade. Feeling confident, then, that I could rely upon them, I next turned to my furnace, which I had filled with numerous pigs of copper and other bronze stuff. The pieces were piled according to the laws of art, that is to say, so resting one upon the other that the flames could play freely through them, in order that the metal might heat and liquefy the sooner. At last I called out heartily to set the furnace going. The logs of pine were heaped in, and, what with the unctuous resin of the wood and the good draught I had given, my furnace worked so well that I was obliged to rush from

side to side to keep it going. The labour was more than I could stand; yet I forced myself to strain every nerve and muscle. To increase my anxieties, the workshop took fire, and we were afraid lest the roof should fall upon our heads; while, from the garden, such a storm of wind and rain kept blowing in, that it perceptibly cooled the furnace.

Battling thus with all these untoward circumstances for several hours, and exerting myself beyond even the measure of my powerful constitution, I could at last bear up no longer, and a sudden fever, of the utmost possible intensity, attacked me. I felt absolutely obliged to go and fling myself upon my bed. Sorely against my will having to drag myself away from the spot, I turned to my assistants, about ten or more in all, what with master-founders, hand-workers, country-fellows, and my own special journeymen, among whom was Bernardino Mannellini of Mugello, my apprentice through several years. To him in particular I spoke: "Look, my dear Bernardino, that you observe the rules which I have taught you; do your best with all despatch, for the metal will soon be fused. You cannot go wrong; these honest men will get the channels ready; you will easily be able to drive back the two plugs with this pair of iron crooks; and I am sure that my mould will fill miraculously.<sup>19</sup> I feel more ill than I ever did in all my life, and verily believe that it will kill me before a few hours are over." Thus, with despair at heart, I left them, and betook myself to bed.

No sooner had I got to bed, than I ordered my servingmaids to carry food and wine for all the men into the workshop; at the same time I cried: "I shall not be alive to-morrow." They tried to encourage me, arguing that my illness would pass over, since it came from excessive fatigue. In this way I spent two hours battling with the fever, which steadily increased, and calling out continually, "I feel that I am dying." My housekeeper, who was named Mona Fiore da Castel del Rio, a very notable manager and no less warm-hearted, kept chiding me for my discouragement; but, on the other hand, she paid me every kind attention which was possible. However, the sight of my physical pain and moral dejection so affected her, that, in spite of that brave heart of hers, she could not refrain from shedding tears; and yet, so far as she was able, she took good

19. The translator, John Addington Symonds, explains in his gloss: "The *canali* or channels were sluices for carrying the molten metal from the furnace into the mould. The *mandriani*, which I have translated by iron crooks, were poles fitted at the end with curved irons, by which the openings of the furnace, plugs, or in Italian *spine*, could be partially or wholly driven

back, so as to let the molten metal flow through the channels into the mould. When the metal reached the mould, it entered in a red-hot stream between the *tonaca*, or outside mould, and the *anima*, or inner block, filling up exactly the space which had previously been occupied by the wax extracted by a method of slow burning alluded to above."



care I should not see them. While I was thus terribly afflicted, I beheld the figure of a man enter my chamber, twisted in his body into the form of a capital S. He raised a lamentable, doleful voice, like one who announces their last hour to men condemned to die upon the scaffold, and spoke these words: "O Benvenuto! your statue is spoiled, and there is no hope whatever of saving it." No sooner had I heard the shriek of that wretch than I gave a howl which might have been heard from the sphere of flame. Jumping from my bed, I seized my clothes and began to dress. The maids, and my lad, and every one who came around to help me, got kicks or blows of the fist, while I kept crying out in lamentation "Ah! traitors! enviers! This is an act of treason, done by malice prepense! But I swear by God that I will sift it to the bottom, and before I die will leave such witness to the world of what I can do as shall make a score of mortals marvel."

When I had got my clothes on, I strode with soul bent on mischief toward the workshop; there I beheld the men, whom I had left awhile in such high spirits, standing stupefied and downcast. I began at once and spoke: "Up with you! Attend to me! Since you have not been able or willing to obey the directions I gave you, obey me now that I am with you to conduct my work in person. Let no one contradict me, for in cases like this we need the aid of hand and hearing, not of advice." When I had uttered these words, a certain Maestro Alessandro Lastricati broke silence and said: "Look you, Benvenuto, you are going to attempt an enterprise which the laws of art do not sanction, and which cannot succeed." I turned upon him with such fury and so full of mischief, that he and all the rest of them exclaimed with one voice: "On then! Give orders! We will obey your least commands, so long as life is left in us." I believe they spoke thus feelingly because they thought I must fall shortly dead upon the ground. I went immediately to inspect the furnace, and found that the metal was all curdled; an accident which we express by "being caked." I told two of the hands to cross the road, and fetch from the house of the butcher Capretta, a load of young oak-wood, which had lain dry for above a year; this wood had been previously offered me by Madame Ginevra, wife of the said Capretta. So soon as the first armfuls arrived, I began to fill the grate beneath the furnace. Now oak-wood of that kind heats more powerfully than any other sort of tree; and for this reason, where a slow fire is wanted, as in the case of gun-foundry, alder or pine is preferred. Accordingly, when the logs took fire, oh! how the cake began to stir beneath that awful heat, to glow and sparkle in a blaze! At the same time I kept stirring up the channels, and sent men upon the roof to stop the conflagration, which had gathered

force from the increased combustion in the furnace; also I caused boards, carpets, and other hangings to be set up against the garden, in order to protect us from the violence of the rain.

When I had thus provided against these several disasters, I roared out first to one man and then to another: "Bring this thing here! Take that thing there!" At this crisis, when the whole gang saw the cake was on the point of melting, they did my bidding, each fellow working with the strength of three. I then ordered half a pig of pewter to be brought, which weighed about sixty pounds, and flung it into the middle of the cake inside the furnace. By this means, and by piling on wood and stirring now with pokers and now with iron rods, the curdled mass rapidly began to liquefy. Then, knowing I had brought the dead to life again, against the firm opinion of those ignoramuses, I felt such vigour fill my veins, that all those pains of fever, all those fears of death, were quite forgotten.

All of a sudden an explosion took place, attended by a tremendous flash of flame, as though a thunderbolt had formed and been discharged amongst us. Unwonted and appalling terror astonished every one, and me more even than the rest. When the din was over and the dazzling light extinguished, we began to look each other in the face. Then I discovered that the cap of the furnace had blown up, and the bronze was bubbling over from its source beneath. So I had the mouths of my mould immediately opened, and at the same time drove in the two plugs which kept back the molten metal. But I noticed that it did not flow as rapidly as usual, the reason being probably that the fierce heat of the fire we kindled had consumed its base alloy. Accordingly I sent for all my pewter platters, porringers, and dishes, to the number of some two hundred pieces, and had a portion of them cast, one by one, into the channels, the rest into the furnace. This expedient succeeded, and every one could now perceive that my bronze was in most perfect liquefaction, and my mould was filling; whereupon they all with heartiness and happy cheer assisted and obeyed my bidding, while I, now here, now there, gave orders, helped with my own hands, and cried aloud: "O God! Thou that by Thy immeasurable power didst rise from the dead, and in Thy glory didst ascend to heaven!" . . . even thus in a moment my mould was filled; and seeing my work finished, I fell upon my knees, and with all my heart gave thanks to God.

After all was over, I turned to a plate of salad on a bench there, and ate with hearty appetite, and drank together with the whole crew. Afterwards I retired to bed, healthy and happy, for it was now two hours before morning, and slept as sweetly as though I had never felt a touch of illness. My good housekeeper, without my giving any orders, had prepared a fat capon for my repast. So that,

when I rose, about the hour for breaking fast, she presented herself with a smiling countenance, and said: "Oh! is that the man who felt that he was dying? Upon my word, I think the blows and kicks you dealt us last night, when you were so enraged, and had that demon in your body as it seemed, must have frightened away your mortal fever! The fever feared that it might catch it too, as we did!" All my poor household, relieved in like measure from anxiety and overwhelming labour, went at once to buy earthen vessels in order to replace the pewter I had cast away. Then we dined together joyfully; nay, I cannot remember a day in my whole life when I dined with greater gladness or a better appetite.

After our meal I received visits from the several men who had assisted me. They exchanged congratulations, and thanked God for our success, saying they had learned and seen things done which other masters judged impossible. I too grew somewhat glorious; and deeming I had shown myself a man of talent, indulged a boastful humour. So I thrust my hand into my purse, and paid them all to their full satisfaction.

That evil fellow, my mortal foe, Messer Pier Francesco Ricci, majordomo of the Duke, took great pains to find out how the affair had gone. In answer to his questions, the two men whom I suspected of having caked my metal for me, said I was no man, but of a certainty some powerful devil, since I had accomplished what no craft of the art could do; indeed they did not believe a mere ordinary fiend could work such miracles as I in other ways had shown. They exaggerated the whole affair so much, possibly in order to excuse their own part in it, that the majordomo wrote an account to the Duke, who was then in Pisa, far more marvellous and full of thrilling incidents than what they had narrated.

After I had let my statue cool for two whole days, I began to uncover it by slow degrees. The first thing I found was that the head of Medusa had come out most admirably, thanks to the air-vents; for, as I had told the Duke, it is the nature of fire to ascend. Upon advancing farther, I discovered that the other head, that, namely, of Perseus, had succeeded no less admirably; and this astonished me far more, because it is at a considerably lower level than that of the Medusa. Now the mouths of the mould were placed above the head of Perseus and behind his shoulders; and I found that all the bronze my furnace contained had been exhausted in the head of this figure. It was a miracle to observe that not one fragment remained in the orifice of the channel, and that nothing was wanting to the statue. In my great astonishment I seemed to see in this the hand of God arranging and controlling all.

I went on uncovering the statue with success, and ascertained that everything had come out in perfect order, until I reached the foot of the right leg on which the statue rests. There the heel itself

was formed, and going farther, I found the foot apparently complete. This gave me great joy on the one side, but was half unwelcome to me on the other, merely because I had told the Duke that it could not come out. However, when I reached the end, it appeared that the toes and a little piece above them were unfinished, so that about half the foot was wanting. Although I knew that this would add a trifle to my labour, I was very well pleased, because I could now prove to the Duke how well I understood my business. It is true that far more of the foot than I expected had been perfectly formed; the reason of this was that, from causes I have recently described, the bronze was hotter than our rules of art prescribe; also that I had been obliged to supplement the alloy with my pewter cups and platters, which no one else, I think, had ever done before.

Having now ascertained how successfully my work had been accomplished, I lost no time in hurrying to Pisa, where I found the Duke. He gave me a most gracious reception, as did also the Duchess; and although the majordomo had informed them of the whole proceedings, their Excellencies deemed my performance far more stupendous and astonishing when they heard the tale from my own mouth. . . .

## MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

(1533-1592)

Essays (Essais)\*

*Of Cannibals*†

When King Pyrrhus<sup>1</sup> passed over into Italy, after acknowledging the good order that prevailed in the army that the Romans had sent to meet him, he said, 'I know not what barbarians are these (for so the Greeks called all foreign nations), but the disposition of this army I see is by no means barbarous'. The Greeks said the same of the army which Flaminius brought into their country, as did also Philip, on viewing from an eminence the orderly distribution of the Roman camp, in his kingdom, under Publius Sulpicius Galba.<sup>2</sup> Thereby we may see how we should be on our guard against

\* Books I and II were published in 1580; Book II, together with Books I and II revised and amplified, in 1588; a posthumous edition, with further additions, in 1595. Our text is from *The Essays of Montaigne*, translated by E. J. Trechmann, published by the Oxford University Press.

† *Essays*, Book I, Chapter 31.

1. king of Epirus, in Greece, fought the Romans in Italy in 280 B.C.

2. Both Titus Quinctius Flaminius (mentioned earlier in this sentence) and Publius Sulpicius Galba were Roman statesmen and generals who fought Philip V of Macedon in the early years of the second century B.C.

clinging to vulgar opinions, and how we should judge things by the light of reason, and not from common rumour.

I had living with me for a long time a man who had lived for ten or twelve years in that other world which was discovered in our century, in that place where Villegaignon landed, which he called *Antarctic France*.<sup>3</sup> This discovery of an unbounded country seems to me worthy of consideration. I do not know that I could pledge myself that some other discovery may not be made in the future, so many persons greater than we having been mistaken about this one. I fear our eyes are greater than our bellies, and that we have more curiosity than capacity. We embrace all, but we clasp only wind.

Plato<sup>4</sup> introduces Solon, telling how he had learned of the priests of the city of Saïs in Egypt that, in days of old and before the Deluge, there was a large island named Atlantis, directly at the mouth of the Strait of Gibraltar, which contained more countries than all Asia and Africa together; and that the kings of that region, who not only possessed that island, but had extended their dominion so far into the mainland, that of the breadth of Africa they held as far as Egypt, and of the length of Europe as far as Tuscany, attempted to stride even into Asia, and to subjugate all the nations that border on the Mediterranean Sea as far as the gulf of the Greater Sea,<sup>5</sup> and to that end traversed the Spains, Gaul, Italy, as far as Greece, where the Athenians stood up against them; but that some time after both the Athenians and they and their island were swallowed up by the Flood.

It is most likely that that extreme watery devastation has caused some wonderful alterations in the habitations of the earth, as it is thought that the sea cut off Sicily from Italy,

These lands, 'tis said, one continent of yore  
 (Such change can ages work) an earthquake tore  
 Asunder; in with havoc rushed the main,  
 And far Sicilia from Hesperia bore,  
 And now, where leapt the parted lands in twain,  
 The narrow tide pours through, 'twixt severed town and plain;  
 (Virgil.)<sup>6</sup>

Cyprus from Syria, the island of Negropont from the mainland of Bocotia; and elsewhere joined lands which were divided, by filling up the channels between them with sand and mud:

3. in Brazil. Villegaignon landed there in 1557.

4. in his *Timaeus*.

5. the Black Sea.

6. *Aeneid*, Book III, ll. 414 ff.

Swamps, sterile long, all plashy, rank and drear,  
 Groan 'neath the plough, and feed whole cities near.  
 (Horace.)<sup>7</sup>

But it does not appear very likely that that great island was the new world that we have lately discovered, for it almost touched Spain, and it would have been an incredible result of an inundation to have removed it as far back as it is, more than twelve hundred leagues; besides that our modern navigators have already almost discovered it to be no island, but a firm land holding together with the East Indies on the one hand, and on the other with the lands which lie under the two poles; or, if it is separated from them, it is by so narrow a strait and interval, that it does not on that account deserve to be called an island.

It would seem that there are movements, some natural, others diseased, in those great bodies as well as in our own. When I consider the inroads that my river, the Dordogne, is making even in my time, upon the right bank in its descent, and that in twenty years it has gained so much ground, and robbed many buildings of their foundations, I plainly see that an extraordinary disturbance is going on; for if it had always been going on at this rate, or were to do so in the future, the face of the world would be entirely altered. But rivers are subject to changes: now they overflow in one direction, now in another, now they keep within their beds. I do not speak of the sudden inundations whose causes are manifest. In Médoc, along the sea-shore, my brother the Sicur d'Arsac sees an estate of his buried beneath the sands that the sea vomits before it; the tops of several buildings are still visible; his rents and domains have been converted into very poor pasturage. The inhabitants say that the sea has been for some time pushing so strongly towards them, that they have lost four leagues of land. These sands are its harbingers, and we see great dunes of moving sand, that march half a league before it, and are gaining ground.

The other testimony from antiquity, from which some infer this discovery, is in Aristotle, if at least that little book *Of Unheard-of Marvels* be his. He there relates how certain Carthaginians, having ventured across the Atlantic Sea, outside the Strait of Gibraltar, and navigated a long time, had at last discovered a large fertile island, all clothed in woods, and watered by broad and deep rivers, far remote from any mainland; and that they, and others after them, attracted by the goodness and fertility of the soil, had gone thither with their wives and children and begun to settle there. The lords of Carthage, seeing that their country was gradually becoming depopulated, expressly forbade any more to go there, on pain of

death, and drove out those new settlers, fearing, it is said, lest in course of time they might multiply to such an extent as to supplant themselves and ruin their state. This narration of Aristotle no more agrees with our new-found lands than the other.

This man<sup>8</sup> I had was a simple and ignorant fellow: hence the more fit to give true evidence; for your sophisticated men are more curious observers, and take in more things, but they glose them; to lend weight to their interpretations and induce your belief, they cannot help altering their story a little. They never describe things as they really are, but bend them and mask them according to the point of view from which they see things, and, to make their judgements the more credible and attractive, they are not loath to add a little to their matter, and to spin out and amplify their tale. Now we need either a very truthful man, or one so simple that he has not the art of building up and giving an air of probability to fictions, and is wedded to no theory. Such was my man; and he has besides at different times brought several sailors and traders to see me, whom he had known on that voyage. So I shall content myself with his information, without troubling myself about what the cosmographers may say about it.

We need topographers who would give us an exact account of the places which they have visited. But because they have this advantage over us that they have seen Palestine, they claim to enjoy the privilege of telling us new things of all the rest of the world. I would have every man write about what he knows, and no more than he knows, not only in this but on all other subjects. For a man may have some particular knowledge or experience of the nature of a river or a fountain, who otherwise knows no more than what everybody knows. Yet he will undertake, in order to circulate this little scrap of knowledge, to write a book on the whole science of physics. From this fault spring many great abuses.

Now, to return to my subject, from what I have heard of that nation, I can see nothing barbarous or uncivilized about it, except that we all call barbarism that which does not fit in with our usages. And indeed we have no other level of truth and reason but the example and model of the opinions and usages of the country we live in. There we always see the perfect religion, the perfect government, the perfect and accomplished manner of doing all things. Those people are wild in the sense in which we call wild the fruits that Nature has produced by herself and in her ordinary progress; whereas in truth it is those we have altered artificially and diverted from the common order, that we should rather call wild. In the first we still see, in full life and vigour, the genuine and most

8. Montaigne goes back to the man referred to in the second paragraph of this essay.

natural and useful virtues and properties, which we have bastardized in the latter, and only adapted to please our corrupt taste. And yet in some of the uncultivated fruits of those countries there is a delicacy of flavour that is excellent even to our taste, and rivals even our own. It is not reasonable that art should gain the point of honour over our great and powerful mother Nature. We have so overburdened the beauty and richness of her works with our inventions, that we have quite smothered her. And yet, wherever she shines in her purity, she marvellously puts to shame our vain and trivial efforts,

Uncared, unmarked the ivy blossoms best;  
Midst desert rocks the ilex clusters still;  
And sweet the wild bird's untaught melody.  
(Propertius.)<sup>9</sup>

With all our efforts we are unable even to copy the nest of the smallest of little birds, its contexture, its beauty and convenience; not so much as the web of the poor spider.

All things, says Plato,<sup>10</sup> are produced either by Nature, or by chance, or by art: the greatest and most beautiful by one or other of the two first; the least and most imperfect by the latter.

Those nations, then, appear to me so far barbarous in this sense, that their minds have been formed to a very slight degree, and that they are still very close to their original simplicity. They are still ruled by the laws of Nature, and very little corrupted by ours; but they are still in such a state of purity, that I am sometimes vexed that they were not known earlier, at a time when there were men who could have appreciated them better than we do.

I am sorry that Lycurgus<sup>11</sup> and Plato had no knowledge of them, for it seems to me that what we have learned by contact with those nations surpasses not only all the beautiful colours in which the poets have depicted the golden age, and all their ingenuity in inventing a happy state of man, but also the conceptions and desires of Philosophy herself. They were incapable of imagining so pure and native a simplicity, as that which we see by experience; nor could they have believed that human society could have been maintained with so little human artifice and solder. This is a nation,<sup>12</sup> I should say to Plato, which has no manner of traffic; no knowledge of letters; no science of numbers; no name of magistrate or statesman; no use for slaves; neither wealth nor poverty; no contracts; no successions; no partitions; no occupation but that of idleness;

9. *Elegies*, Book I, Elegy ii, ll. 10 ff.

10. See his *Laws*.

11. the half-legendary Spartan law-giver (ninth century B.C.).

12. The passage beginning here is always compared with Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act II, Scene 1, ll. 154 ff.



only a general respect of parents; no clothing; no agriculture; no metals; no use of wine or corn. The very words denoting falsehood, treachery, dissimulation, avarice, envy, detraction, pardon, unheard of. How far removed from this perfection would he find the ideal republic he imagined! *Men newly come from the hands of the gods* (Seneca).<sup>13</sup>

These manners first by nature taught. (Virgil.)<sup>14</sup>

For the rest, they live in a region with a very agreeable and very temperate climate, so that, according to my witnesses, a sick man is rarely seen; and they assured me that they had never seen any man shaking with palsy, or with dripping eyes, toothless or bent with age. They are settled along the sea-coast, and closed in on the land side by large and high mountains, the land between them and the sea extending for a hundred leagues or thereabouts. They have great abundance of fish and flesh, which bear no resemblance to ours, and they eat them roasted without any other preparation. The first man who brought a horse thither, although he had associated with them on several previous voyages, so horrified them in the riding posture, that they shot him dead with arrows before recognizing him.

Their buildings are very long, capable of holding two or three hundred souls, covered with the bark of tall trees, the strips resting by one end on the ground, and leaning to and supporting one another at the top, after the manner of some of our barns, the coverings of which slope down to the ground and serve as side-walls. They have a wood so hard that they can cut with it, of which they make their swords, and gridirons to roast their meat. Their beds are made of cotton tissue, suspended from the roof like those in our ships, each one having his own: for the women sleep apart from their husbands.

They rise with the sun and eat immediately after rising, for the whole day: for they have no other meal. They drink nothing with that meal, like some other Eastern peoples of whom Suidas<sup>15</sup> tells us, who drank apart from eating; but they drink several times a day, and to excess. Their drink is made of some root, and is of the colour of our claret wines, and they only drink it warm. This beverage will keep only two or three days: it has a slightly pungent taste, is anything but heady, good for the stomach, and laxative for such as are not used to it, but a very pleasant drink for those who are. For bread they use a certain white material resembling preserved coriander. I have tried some of it: it is sweet but rather tasteless.

13. *Epistles*, Epistle xc.

14. *Georgics*, Book II, l. 20.

15. a Byzantine lexicographer.

The whole day is spent in dancing. The younger men hunt animals with bows. Some of the women meanwhile spend their time warming their drink, which is their chief duty. One of their old men, in the morning before they begin to eat, preaches to the whole barnful of people in common, walking from one end to the other, repeating the same words several times, until he has finished the round (for the buildings are quite a hundred paces in length). He recommends only two things, valour against the enemy and love to their wives. And they never fail to stress this obligation, which forms their refrain, 'that it is they who keep their wine warm and seasoned'.

In several places, among others in my house, may be seen the formation of their beds, of their ropes, their wooden swords and bracelets, with which they cover their wrists in battle, and large canes open at one end, by the sound of which they keep the time and rhythm of their dances. They are close shaven all over, and remove the hair much more neatly than we do although their razors are only made of wood or stone. They believe the soul to be immortal, and that those who have deserved well of the gods are lodged in that part of the heaven where the sun rises, and those who are damned in the west.

They have some kind of priest and prophet, who very seldom appears among the people, having his dwelling in the mountains. On his arrival there is a great feast and a solemn assembly of several villages (each barn, as I have described it, forms a village, and they are about a French league<sup>16</sup> distant one from the other). This prophet speaks to them in public, exhorting them to virtue and their duty; but their whole ethical science comprises only these two articles: an unfaltering courage in war and affection to their women. This man foretells things to come, and the issue they are to expect from their enterprises; urges them to war, or holds them back; but he does so on the understanding that, where he fails to prophesy correctly, and if things turn out otherwise than he has predicted, he is cut into a thousand pieces if he is caught, and condemned for a false prophet. For that reason he who has once miscalculated is seen no more.

Divination is a gift of God, wherefore to abuse it ought to be regarded as a punishable imposture. Among the Scythians, when the prophets failed to hit the mark, they were laid, shackled hand and foot, on a little cart filled with heather and drawn by oxen, on which they were burned. They who take in hand such matters as depend on the conduct of human capacity are to be excused if they do their best. But those others who come and delude us with assurances of an extraordinary faculty that is beyond our ken, should

16. about 2.49 miles.

they not be punished when they fail to carry out what they promise, and for the temerity of their imposture?

They have their wars with the nations beyond their mountains, further back on the mainland, to which they go quite naked, with no other weapons but bows or wooden swords pointed at one end, after the fashion of the tongues of our boar-spears. It is marvellous with what obstinacy they fight their battles, which never end but in massacre and bloodshed: for of routs and terrors they know not even the meaning. Each man brings back as a trophy the head of the enemy he has slain, and fixes it over the entrance to his dwelling. After treating his prisoner well for a considerable time, and giving him all that hospitality can devise, his captor convokes a great gathering of his acquaintance. He ties a cord to one of his prisoner's arms, holding him at some distance for fear of being hurt, and gives the other arm to be held in the same way by his best friend; and these two, in presence of the whole assembly, dispatch him with their swords. This done, they roast and eat him in common, and send bits of him to their absent friends. Not, as one might suppose, for nourishment, as the ancient Scythians used to do, but to signify an extreme revenge.

And that it is so, may be seen from this: having perceived that the Portuguese, who had allied themselves with their adversaries, inflicted a different kind of death on their prisoners, which was to bury them up to the waist, shoot the upper part of the bodies full of arrows, and afterwards to hang them; they imagined that these people of another world (seeing that they had sown the knowledge of a great many vices among their neighbours, and were much greater masters than themselves in every kind of wickedness) had some reason for adopting this kind of vengeance, and that it must be more painful than their own; wherefore they began to give up their old method, and followed this one.

I am not so much concerned that we should remark on the horrible barbarity of such acts, as that, whilst rightly judging their errors, we should be so blind to our own. I think there is more barbarity in eating a live than a dead man, in tearing on the rack and torturing the body of a man still full of feeling, in roasting him piccemeal and giving him to be bitten and mangled by dogs and swine (as we have not only read, but seen within fresh memory, not between old enemies, but between neighbours and fellow citizens, and, what is worse, under the cloak of piety and religion),<sup>17</sup> than in roasting and eating him after he is dead.

Chrysippus and Zeno, the leaders of the Stoic sect, thought indeed that there was no harm in making use of our carrion for any

17. The allusion is to the spectacles of religious warfare which Montaigne

himself had witnessed in his time and country.

purpose in case of necessity, and of extracting nourishment from it. And our ancestors,<sup>18</sup> when besieged by Caesar in the city of Alexia, decided to relieve the famine during the siege by eating the bodies of the old men, women, and other persons incapable of fighting;

Time was, the Gascons, as old tales relate,  
Thus fed, contended long with cruel fate.  
(Juvenal.)<sup>19</sup>

And physicians are not afraid of using it in all sorts of ways as cures, either for inward or outward application. But no man's brain was ever so disordered that he would excuse treachery, disloyalty, cruelty, tyranny, which are our ordinary vices.

We may therefore well call those people barbarians in respect to the rules of reason, but not in respect to ourselves, who surpass them in every kind of barbarity.

Their warfare is entirely noble and generous, and is as fair and excusable as can be expected in that human disease: their only motive being a zeal for valour. They do not strive to conquer new territory, for they still enjoy that luxuriance of nature which provides them, without labour and pains, with all necessary things in such abundance, that they have no need to enlarge their borders. They are still in that happy state of not desiring more than their natural needs demand: all that is over and above it is for them superfluity.

They generally call each other, if of the same age, brothers; if younger, children; and the old men are fathers to all the others. These latter leave to their heirs in common the full and undivided possession of their property, without any but that pure title that Nature gives to her creatures, by bringing them into the world. If their neighbours cross the mountains to attack them, and gain the victory over them, the acquisition of the victor is the glory and advantage of having proved himself the superior in valour and virtue, for otherwise they have no need for the spoils of the vanquished; and so they return to their own country, where they have no want of any necessities, nor even of that great portion, which is to know how to enjoy happily their condition, and be content with it. These do the same in their turn. They ask of their prisoners no other ransom but a confession and acknowledgement of being vanquished. But you will not find one in a whole century who would not rather die than yield, either by word or look, one tittle of an invincible greatness of courage; not one who would not rather be killed and eaten than even pray to be spared. They are very liberal in their treatment of their prisoners, in order to make life the

18. the Gauls.

19. *Satires*, Satire xv, ll. 93 f.

more dear to them, and usually entertain them with threats of their impending death, the torments they will suffer, the preparations made to that end, the cutting up of their limbs, and the banquet that will be made at their expense. All this is done with the sole purpose of extorting from them a weak or spiritless word, or to give them a desire to escape, in order to gain the advantage of having terrified them and shaken their firmness. For indeed, if rightly taken, therein alone lies the real victory:

The victor's wreath no triumphs more attest  
Than when the foe's subjection is confest.

(Claudian.)<sup>20</sup>

The Hungarians, very bellicose fighters, did not formerly pursue their advantage further than making their enemy cry for mercy. For, after forcing from them that confession, they let them go without hurt or ransom, except, at the most, making them pledge their word not again to take up arms against them.

We often enough gain an advantage over our enemy which is a borrowed advantage, and to which we have no real claim. To have more muscular arms and legs is the quality of a porter, not a sign of valour; skill is a dead and corporal quality: it is a stroke of fortune that causes our adversary to stumble or to be dazzled by the glare of the sun; it is a trick of art and science that makes an able fencer, who may easily be a coward and an insignificant fellow.

A man's value and estimation consists in heart and will: there lies his true honour. Valour is strength, not of legs and arms, but of heart and soul; it lies not in the goodness of our horse, or our weapons, but in our own. He who falls fighting with obstinate courage, *if his legs fail him, he fights on his knees* (Seneca).<sup>21</sup> He who, in spite of being in danger of imminent death, abates nothing of his assurance, who, in yielding up his soul, still fixes on his enemy a firm and scornful glance, is vanquished, not by us, but by Fortune: he is slain but not conquered.

The most valiant are sometimes the most unfortunate. Hence there are triumphant defeats that vie in glory with victories. Neither did those four sister victories, the most glorious that the sun has ever beheld with its eyes, of Salamis, Plataea, Mycale, and Sicily,<sup>22</sup> ever dare to oppose their combined glories to the glory of the discomfiture of King Leonidas and his comrades at the pass of Thermopylae.<sup>23</sup>

What man ever hastened with a more glorious and ambitious

20. *Of the Sixth Consulate of Honorius*, ll. 248 f.

21. *Of Providence*, Book II.

22. Montaigne here refers to the famous Greek victories against the Persians and (at Himera, Sicily) against

the Carthaginians in or about 480 B.C.

23. The Spartan king Leonidas' defense of the pass at Thermopylae also took place in 480 B.C., during the war against the Persians.

desire to the winning, than Captain Ischolas did to the losing, of a battle? What man ever used more care and ingenuity to secure his own safety than he did to ensure his destruction? He was charged to defend a certain pass in the Peloponnesus against the Arcadians. But knowing that he was wholly unable to do so, on account of the nature of the place and the inequality of the forces, and being sure that every man who confronted the enemy must needs remain on the spot; on the other hand, deeming it unworthy both of his own virtue and magnanimity, and of the name of a Spartan, to fail in his charge, he adopted a middle course between these two extremes, which was in this manner: the youngest and most active of his band he reserved for the service and defence of their country, and sent them home; and with those whose loss would be of less account he decided to hold the pass, and with their death make the enemy purchase their entry as dear as possible. And so it fell out: for, being presently surrounded on every side by the Arcadians, after a great butchery of them he and his comrades were all put to the sword. Was ever a trophy raised to a victor that was not rather due to these vanquished men? The part that true victory plays is the struggle, not the coming off safe; and the honour of virtue consists in combating, not in beating.

To return to our narrative. Far from giving in, in spite of all they suffer, these prisoners, on the contrary, during the two or three months that they are held in captivity, bear a cheerful countenance; they urge their captors to hasten to put them to the proof, defy them, insult them, reproach them with their cowardice and the number of battles lost against their own countrymen.

I have a song composed by a prisoner, which contains this outburst: 'Come boldly, every one of you, and assemble together to dine off me, for you shall at the same time eat your fathers and grandfathers, whose flesh has served to feed and nourish this body. These muscles, this flesh and these veins are yours, poor fools that you are! can you not see that they still contain the substance of your ancestors' limbs? Relish them well, you will find that they have the flavour of your own flesh.' A fiction that by no means savours of barbarity. On the pictures which represent these prisoners being executed or at the point of death, they are seen spitting in the face of their slayers or making mouths at them. Indeed they never cease to challenge and defy them by word and look until the breath is out of their body. Verily here we see men who are indeed savages if we compare them with ourselves: for either they must be so in good sooth, or we; there is a wonderful distance between their character and ours.

The men there have several wives, and the higher their reputation for valour the greater is the number of their wives. It is a re-

markably beautiful feature in their marriages, that the same jealousy that our wives have to keep us from the love and favors of other women, they have to an equal degree to procure it. Being more solicitous for their husbands' honour than for anything else, they use their best endeavours to have as many companions as they can, seeing that that is a proof of their husbands' worth.

Ours will cry 'miracle', but it is not so. It is after all a proper matrimonial virtue, but of the highest order. And in the Bible, Leah, Rachel, Sarah and Jacob's wives accommodated their husbands with their fair handmaids; and Livia gratified Augustus' appetites to her own detriment; and Stratonice, the wife of King Deiotarus,<sup>24</sup> not only lent her husband the use of a very beautiful young chambermaid in her service, but carefully brought up her children, and gave them a shoulder in succeeding to their father's estates.

And, that it may not be supposed that all this is done through a simple and slavish obligation to follow usage, and under the weight of authority of their ancient customs, without reasoning or judgement, and because their minds are too dull to imagine any other, I must give a few proofs of their intellectual capacity. Besides the warlike song I have just cited I have another, of an amorous nature, which begins thus: 'Adder, stay; stay, adder, that thy colours may serve as a pattern for my sister to work a rich girdle to give to my love: thus shall thy beauty and disposition of thy spots be preferred for all time to all other serpents.' This first verse is the burden of the song. Now, I have enough knowledge of poetry to judge this much: that not only is there nothing barbarous in this idea, but that it is altogether Anacreontic.<sup>25</sup> Their language, by the way, is a soft language, with an agreeable tone, and their terminations resemble the Greek.

Three men of this nation, not knowing how dear, in tranquillity and happiness, it will one day cost them to know the corruptions of this side of the world, and that this intercourse will be the cause of their ruin, which indeed I imagine is already advanced (poor wretches, to be allured by the desire to see new things and to leave their own serene sky to come and see ours!), were at Rouen at a time when the late King Charles the Ninth was there. The King had a long talk with them. They were shown our ways, our pomp, the form of a fine city. After that somebody asked their opinion, desiring to know what they most wondered at. They mentioned three things, the third of which I am sorry to have forgotten, but I still remember two. They said that in the first place they thought it very strange that so many big men with beards, strong and armed,

<sup>24</sup> tetrarch of Galatia, in Asia Minor.

<sup>25</sup> worthy of Anacreon (572?–488? B.C.) major Greek writer of amatory lyrics.

who were about the King (they were probably thinking of the Swiss who formed his guard) should submit to obey a child, and that they did not rather choose one of their own number to command them. Secondly (they have a way of speaking of men as if they were halves of one another), that they had observed that there were men amongst us, full and gorged with all kinds of good things, and that their halves were begging at their doors, emaciated with hunger and poverty; and they thought it strange how these necessitous halves could suffer such injustice, and that they did not seize the others by the throat, or set fire to their houses.

I had a long talk with one of them; but I had an interpreter who followed my meaning so badly, and was at such a loss, in his stupidity, to take in my ideas, that I could get little satisfaction out of him. When I asked the native, 'What he gained from his superior position among his people?' (for he was a captain, and our sailors called him a king), he said it was 'to march foremost in war'. How many men did he lead? He pointed to a piece of ground, to signify as many as that space could hold: it might be four or five thousand men. Did all his authority lapse with the war? He said 'that this remained, that, when he visited the villages that were dependent on him, they made paths through their thickets, by which he might pass at his ease.' All this does not sound too ill; but hold! they don't wear trousers.

#### *Of the Inconsistency of Our Actions\**

They who make a practice of comparing human actions are never so perplexed as when they try to piece them together and place them in the same light, for they commonly contradict one another so strangely that it seems impossible they should have come out of the same shop. Marius the younger<sup>26</sup> is now a son of Mars, now a son of Venus.<sup>27</sup> Some one said that Pope Boniface the Eighth entered upon his charge like a fox, behaved therein like a lion, and died like a dog. And who could believe that it was Nero, the very image of cruelty, who, when the sentence of a condemned criminal was brought to him to be signed in the usual way, exclaimed, 'Would to God that I had never learned to writel' So grieved was he in his heart to doom a man to death!

The world is full of such examples, nay, any man may provide such an abundance of them out of his own experience, that I sometimes wonder to see intelligent men at pains to sort the pieces, seeing that irresolution is, in my view, the most common and conspicuous defect of our nature: witness that famous line of Publilius the writer of low comedies,

\* *Essays*, Book II, Chapter 1.

26. nephew of the older and better known Marius. Montaigne's source is

Plutarch's *Life of Marius*.

27. *Mars . . . Venus: war and love.*



Poor is the plan that never can be changed.

(Publilius Syrus.)<sup>28</sup>

It seems reasonable to judge a man by the most ordinary acts of his life, but in view of the natural instability of our habits and opinions, I have often thought that even good authors are wrong in obstinately attributing to us a steadfast and consistent character. They hit upon a general feature in a man and arrange and interpret all his actions in accordance with this fanciful conception; and if they are unable to twist them sufficiently, set them down to dissimulation. Augustus has escaped them, for we see in this man, throughout the course of his life, so manifest, abrupt, and continual a variety of actions, that he has slipped through the fingers of even the most daring critics, and been left undecided. I find nothing more difficult to believe than man's consistency, and nothing more easy than his inconsistency. If we examine him in detail and judge of his actions separately, bit by bit, we shall most often find this true.

Throughout ancient history it would be difficult to choose a dozen men who have steered their lives in one certain and constant course, which is the principal aim of wisdom. For, to comprise it all in one word, as an ancient writer<sup>29</sup> says, and to embrace all the rules of life in one, is 'to wish and not to wish always the same thing. I will not vouchsafe to add, he says, provided the wish be right; for if it be not right, it is impossible it should be always the same'. I once learned indeed that vice is no more than want of rule and moderation, and that it is consequently impossible to associate it with consistency. It is a saying attributed to Demosthenes, 'that the beginning of all virtue is consultation and deliberation; and the end and perfection, constancy'. If reason directed our course we should choose the fairest; but no one has thought of that:

He scorns that which he sought, seeks what he scorned of late;

He flows and ebbs, his whole life contradiction. (Horace.)<sup>30</sup>

Our ordinary practice is to follow the inclinations of our appetite, to right, to left, up hill, down dale, as we are borne along by the wind of opportunity. We do not consider what we wish except at the moment of wishing it, and we change like that animal which takes its colour from what it is laid upon. What we have but now determined we presently alter, and soon again we retrace our steps: it is nothing but wavering and uncertainty;

We are led as a puppet is moved by the strings.

(Horace.)<sup>31</sup>

28. *Apothegms (Sententiae)*, l. 362.

29. Seneca, in *Epistles*, Epistle xx.

30. *Epistles*, Book I, Epistle i, ll.

98 f.

31. *Satires*, Book II, Satire vii, l.

82.

We do not go, we are carried along, like things floating, now smoothly, now perturbedly, according as the water is angry or calm;

We see them, knowing not  
What 'tis they want, and seeking ever and ever  
A change of place, as if to drop the burden.  
(Lucretius.)<sup>32</sup>

Every day a new fancy; and our humours move with the changes of weather:

So change the minds of men, like days  
That Father Jove sends down to earth,  
To alternate 'twixt wet and fine. (Homer.)<sup>33</sup>

We waver between different minds; we wish nothing freely, nothing absolutely, nothing constantly. Should any man prescribe and establish definite laws and a definite policy in his own head, he would present throughout his life a shining example of even habits, an order and an unfailing relation of one action to another.

(Empedocles remarked in the inhabitants of Agrigentum this discrepancy, that they abandoned themselves to their pleasures as if they were to die on the morrow, and that they built as if they were never to die.)<sup>34</sup>

The reason will be easily found, as we see in the case of the younger Cato;<sup>35</sup> he who touches one note of the keyboard touches all: there is a harmony of sounds, all in perfect tune with each other, which is not to be mistaken. With us, on the other hand, the rule is: so many actions, so many particular judgements to be passed. The surest, in my opinion, would be to refer them to the nearest circumstances, without seeking any farther, and without drawing from them any other inferences.

It was told me, during the tumultuous times<sup>36</sup> our poor State had to go through, that a young woman who lived quite near to where I then was, had thrown herself from a high window to avoid the forcible caresses of a poor knave of a soldier who was quartered in her house; the fall did not kill her, and, repeating the attempt on her life, she would have cut her throat with a knife, but was prevented; not however without inflicting a serious wound. She herself then confessed that the soldier had done no more than importune her with gifts, entreaties, and solicitations, but that she feared he would in the end proceed to violence. And all this, her words, her

32. *On the Nature of Things*, Book III, ll. 1057 ff.

33. *Odyssey*, Book XVIII, l. 135.

34. from the life of the fifth-century Greek philosopher Empedocles, by Diogenes Laertius.

35. the philosopher, Cato "Uticensis" (first century B.C.); to Montaigne, and also traditionally, he is an epitome of moral and intellectual integrity.

36. See footnote 17 and the corresponding passage in the text of "Of Cannibals."

mien, and the blood which testified to her virtue, in the true manner of a second Lucretia!<sup>37</sup>

Now I have heard, as a fact, that, both before and after, she was a wench not very difficult to come by. As the tale<sup>38</sup> has it, 'Be as handsome and as fine a gentleman as you will, when you have failed in your pursuit, do not immediately conclude an inviolable chastity in your mistress; it does not follow that the muleteer will not find his opportunity.'

Antigonus,<sup>39</sup> having taken a liking to one of his soldiers, on account of his virtue and valour, ordered his physicians to attend him for a persistent internal malady which had long tormented him, and perceiving that after his cure he went much more coldly to work than before, asked him what it was that had so altered and cowed him. 'You yourself, Sire, he replied, by delivering me from the ill which made me indifferent to life.' A soldier of Lucullus,<sup>40</sup> having been plundered by enemies, devised a bold stroke for his revenge; when he had retrieved his loss with interest, Lucullus, whose good opinion he had gained, tried to induce him, with the best persuasions he could think of, to undertake some risky business;

With words that might have stirred a coward's heart.

(Horacc.)<sup>41</sup>

'Employ, he replied, some wretched soldier who has been plundered;'

Though but a rustic clown, he'll go

Who's lost his money-belt,' he said; (Horacc.)<sup>42</sup>

and resolutely refused to go.

When we read that Mahomet having furiously rated Chasan, chief of his Janissaries, for allowing his line of troops to be broken by the Hungarians, and bearing himself like a coward in the battle; and that Chasan made no reply but, alone and just as he was with his weapon in his hand, rushed furiously into the first body of enemies that he met with, and was immediately overwhelmed; it was not so much a justification of his conduct as a change of mood, not so much natural prowess as a new spite.

Do not think it strange that the man who was so venturesome yesterday should prove such a poltroon on the morrow; either anger, or necessity, or company, or wine, or the sound of the trumpet had put his heart into his belly; it was not a courage thus formed by

37. the legendary, virtuous Roman who stabbed herself after being raped by King 'Tarquinius' son.

38. a common folk tale.

39. Macedonian king.

40. Roman general of the first century B.C.

41. *Epistles*, Book II, Epistle ii, l. 36.

42. *Epistles*, Book II, Epistle ii, ll. 39 f.

reason, but a courage stiffened by those circumstances; it was no marvel if other contrary circumstances made a new man of him.

These so supple changes and contradictions which we manifest have made some to imagine that we have two souls, others, that we have two powers which, each in its own way, accompany and stir us, the one to good, the other to evil, since so abrupt a diversity is not to be reconciled with a single subject.

Not only does the wind of accidents stir me according to its blowing, but I am also stirred and troubled by the instability of my attitude; and he who examines himself closely will seldom find himself twice in the same state. I give to my soul now one face, now another, according to the side to which I turn it. If I speak differently of myself, it is because I regard myself differently. All the contradictions are to be found in me, according as the wind turns and changes. Bashful, insolent; chaste, lascivious; talkative, taciturn; clumsy, gentle; witty, dull; peevish, sweet-tempered; mendacious, truthful; knowing, ignorant; and liberal and avaricious and prodigal: all this I see in myself in some degree, according as I veer about; and whoever will study himself very attentively will find in himself, yea, in his judgement, this discordance and unsteadiness. I can say nothing of myself absolutely, simply, and steadily, without confusion and mixture, nor in one word. *Distinguo*<sup>43</sup> is the most universal member of my logic.

Though I am ever inclined to speak well of what is good, and rather to interpret favourably the things that are capable of such interpretation, yet such is the strangeness of our nature that we are often driven to do good, even by vice; if it were not that well-doing is judged by the intention alone.

Therefore a courageous deed ought not to imply a valiant man: the man who is really brave will be always so, and on all occasions. If valour were a habit, and not a sudden eruption, it would make a man equally resolute for all emergencies, the same alone as in company, the same in single combat as in a battle; for let them say what they will, there is not one valour for the pavement and another for the field. As bravely would he bear sickness in his bed as a wound in camp, nor would he fear death in his own home any more than in an assault. We should not see the same man charge with brave assurance into the breach, and afterwards worrying like a woman, over the loss of a law-suit or a son. When, though afraid of infamy, he bears up against poverty; when, though wincing at a surgeon's lancet, he stiffly faces the enemy's sword, the action is praiseworthy, but not the man.

Many Greeks, says Cicero, cannot look upon an enemy, and are brave in sickness. The Cimbrians and the Celtiberians, quite the

43. I distinguish; I separate into its components.

contrary: *For nothing can be consistent that has not reason for its foundation* (Cicero).<sup>44</sup>

No valour could be more extreme in its kind than Alexander's; but it is of one kind only, and is not complete enough, nor universal on all occasions. Incomparable though it be, it has its blemishes. So it is that we see him so desperately disturbed by the slightest suspicions that his subjects may be plotting against his life, and carried away in his investigations to such violent and indiscriminate acts of injustice, and haunted by a fear that upsets his natural good sense. The superstition too with which he was so strongly tainted bears some likeness to pusillanimity. And the excess of his penitence for the murder of Clytus<sup>45</sup> is also evidence of uneven temper.

Our actions are but a patchwork (*they despise pleasure, but are cowardly in pain; they are indifferent to fame, but infamy breaks their spirit*<sup>46</sup>), and we try to gain honour by false pretences. Virtue will not be wooed but for her own sake, and if we sometimes borrow her mask for some other purpose, she will very soon snatch it from our face. When the soul is once steeped in it, the dye is strong and vivid, and will not go without taking the skin with it. Wherefore, to judge a man, we must long and carefully follow his traces. If constancy does not stand firm and wholly on its own foundation, *if the path of life has not been well considered and preconceived* (Cicero);<sup>47</sup> if changing circumstances make him alter his pace (I should say his route, for the pace may be accelerated or retarded by them), let him go: that man will go *A vau le vent* (down the wind), as the motto of our Talbot<sup>48</sup> has it.

It is no wonder, says an ancient writer,<sup>49</sup> that chance has so great a hold over us, since we live by chance. Unless a man has directed his life as a whole to a certain fixed goal, he cannot possibly dispose his particular actions. Unless he have an image of the whole in his mind, he cannot possibly arrange the pieces. How can a painter lay in a stock of colours, if he knows not what he is going to paint? No man draws a definite outline of his life, and we only think it out in details. The archer must first know at what he is aiming, and then accommodate his hand, his bow, the string, the arrow, and his movements, accordingly. Our plans go wrong because they have neither aim nor direction. No wind serves the ship that has no port of destination.

I cannot agree with those judges who, on the strength of seeing one of his tragedies, declared in favour of Sophocles, when accused

44. *Tusculan Disputations*, Book II, Chapter 27.

45. Clytus, a commander in Alexander's army, was killed by him during an argument, an act which Alexander immediately and bitterly regretted, as related by Plutarch in his *Life of Alexander*, Chapters 50-52.

46. Cicero, *Of Duties* (*De officiis*), Book I, Chapter 21.

47. *Paradoxes* (*Paradoxa*), Paradox v.

48. Talbot, an English captain who fought in France and died there in 1453.

49. Seneca, in *Epistles*, Epistle lxxi.

by his son of being incapable of managing his domestic affairs. Nor do I hold with the conclusions arrived at by the Parians who were sent to reform the Milesians. Visiting the island, they remarked the best-cultivated lands and the best-kept country-houses, and made a note of their owners; and then, having called an assembly of the citizens in the town, they appointed these owners the new governors and magistrates, concluding that, being careful of their private affairs, they would be equally careful of those of the public.

We are all made up of bits, and so shapelessly and diversely put together, that every piece, at every moment, plays its own game. And there is as much difference between us and ourselves, as between us and others. *Be sure that it is very difficult to be always the same man* (Seneca).<sup>50</sup> Since ambition can teach a man valour, temperance, and liberality, yea and justice too; since greed can implant in the heart of a shop-apprentice, bred up in obscurity and neglect, the confidence to entrust himself, so far from the domestic hearth, to the mercy of the waves and angry Neptune in a frail bark; since it teaches also discretion and prudence; and since Venus herself can put resolution and temerity into the boy who is still under the discipline of the rod, and embolden the heart of the tender virgin in her mother's arms,

With Love for guide,  
Alone the maid steps o'er her prostrate guards,  
And steals by night into the young man's arms;  
(Tibullus.)<sup>51</sup>

it is not enough for a sober understanding to judge us simply by our external actions: we must sound the innermost recesses, and observe the springs which give the swing. But since it is a high and hazardous undertaking, I would rather that fewer people meddled with it.

### *Apology for Raimond Sebond\**

#### [MAN'S PRESUMPTION AND LITTLENESS]

What does Truth<sup>52</sup> preach to us, when she preaches to us to fly worldly philosophy,<sup>53</sup> when she so often impresses upon us, That our wisdom is but folly in the sight of God;<sup>54</sup> That of all vain things the most vain is man; That man, who presumes on his learning, does not yet know what it is to know;<sup>55</sup> and That if man, who is nothing, thinks himself something, he deceives and beguiles him-

50. *Epistles*, Epistle cxx.

51. *Elegies*, Book II, Elegy i, ll. 75 ff.

\* *Essays*, Book II, Chapter 12. A small but significant section of the very

long "Apology" is reprinted here.

52. revealed truth, the Scriptures.

53. Colossians 2:8.

54. I Corinthians 3:19.

55. I Corinthians 8:2.

self?<sup>56</sup> These sayings of the Holy Spirit so clearly and vividly express what I wish to maintain, that I should need no other proof against men who would bow with all submission and obedience to its authority. But the others<sup>57</sup> would rather be whipped to their own cost, and will not suffer their reason to be combated except by itself.

Let us then for the nonce consider man alone, without outside assistance, armed only with his own weapons, and destitute of the divine grace and knowledge, which comprise all his honour, his strength and the foundation of his being. Let us see how he will hold out in this fine equipment. Let him explain to me, by the force of his reason, on what foundation he has built those great advantages he thinks he has over the other creatures. What has induced him to believe that that wonderful motion of the heavenly vault, the eternal light of those torches rolling so proudly over his head, the awe-inspiring agitations of that infinite sea, were established, and endure through so many centuries for his service and convenience?

Is it possible to imagine anything more ridiculous than that this miserable and puny creature, who is not so much as master of himself, exposed to shocks on all sides should call himself Master and Emperor of the universe, of which it is not in his power to know the smallest part, much less to command it? And that privilege which he assumes of being the only creature in this great edifice that has the capacity to know the beauty and the several parts of it, the only one who is able to give thanks to the architect, and to keep an account of the receipts and outlay of the world: who has sealed him this privilege? Let him show us his letters-patent for this great and noble charge.

Have they been granted in favour of the wise only? Then few people would be concerned. Are the fools and the wicked deserving of so extraordinary a favour, and, being the worst lot in the world, of being preferred to all the rest?

Shall we believe the man who says this, *For whose sake shall we then say that the world has been made? Undoubtedly for those creatures that have the use of reason: these are gods and men, to whom assuredly nothing is superior?* (Balbus the Stoic, according to Cicero).<sup>58</sup> We could never sufficiently deride the impudence of this coupling of gods and men.

But, poor devil, what is there in him deserving of such a privilege? When we consider the incorruptible life of the heavenly

56. Galatians 6:3. This and the previous passages from St. Paul were among those inscribed on the walls of Montaigne's library.

57. those who pretend to arrive at certainty through their human means, their reason, alone.

58. quoted in Cicero's *Of the Nature of the Gods*, Book II, Chapter 53.

bodies, their beauty, their grandeur, their continual motion by so exact a rule:

When we gaze aloft  
Upon the skiey vaults of yon great world  
The ether, fixt high over twinkling stars,  
And into our thought there come the journeyings  
Of sun and moon; (Lucretius.)<sup>59</sup>

when we consider the dominion and power those bodies have, not only over our lives and the conditions of our fortune,

Our lives and actions on the stars depend,  
(Manilius.)<sup>60</sup>

but even over our dispositions, our judgement, our will, which they govern, impel and stir at the mercy of their influence, as our reason discovers and tells us:

This we learn: the far, far distant stars  
Govern by silent laws; the world is ruled  
By periodic causes, and the turns of destiny  
Observed by certain signs; (Manilius.)<sup>61</sup>

when we see that not only a man, not only a king, but kingdoms, empires, and all this world here below are moved according to the lightest swing of the heavenly motions:

How great a change each little motion brings!  
So great this kingdom that it governs kings;  
(Manilius.)<sup>62</sup>

if our virtue, our vices, our talents and our knowledge, if even this dissertation of mine on the power of the stars, this comparison between them and ourselves, comes, as our reason supposes, by their means and their favour;

Maddened by love, Leander swims the strait,  
A Grecian king o'erturns the walls of Troy.  
'Tis this man's lot to give his country laws.  
Sons kill their fathers, fathers kill their sons,  
And brothers arm themselves in mutual strife.  
Not we have made these wars; 'tis Fate compels  
To bear such pains with lacerated limbs.  
And Fate it is that makes me ponder Fate; (Manilius.)<sup>63</sup>

59. *On the Nature of Things*, Book V, ll. 1204 ff.

60. *Astronomicon*, Book III, l. 58.

61. *Astronomicon*, Book I, ll. 60 ff.

62. *Astronomicon*, Book I, l. 57, and Book IV, l. 93.

63. *Astronomicon*, Book IV, ll. 79 ff., and l. 118.



if this little portion of reason we possess has been allotted to us by heaven, how can reason make us the equal of heaven? How can it subject its essence and conditions to our knowledge? All that we see in those bodies fills us with amazement. *What apparatus, what instruments, what levers, what engines, what craftsmen were employed about so mighty a work?* (Cicero).<sup>64</sup>

Why do we deny them a soul, and life and reason? Have we discovered in them any stubborn, senseless stupidity, we who have no concern with them but to obey them? Shall we say that we have seen no other creature but man in possession of a reasoning mind? Why! have we seen anything comparable to the sun? Does it exist the less for our not having seen its like? Does it move the less because no other movement is to be compared with it? If what we have not seen does not exist, our knowledge is marvellously short-sighted: *How close the confines of our mind!* (Cicero).<sup>65</sup>

Is it not a delusion of human vanity to make the moon a celestial earth, and to imagine that there are mountains and valleys upon it, as did Anaxagoras;<sup>66</sup> to set up human habitations and dwellings and establish colonies upon it for our convenience, as do Plato and Plutarch,<sup>67</sup> and to make our earth a bright and shining star? *Amongst other infirmities of human nature is that mental blindness which not only forces man to err, but makes him hug his errors* (Seneca).<sup>68</sup> *The corruptible body weighs down the soul, and this earthly habitation prevents it from pondering on many things* ('The Book of Wisdom, quoted by Saint Augustine').<sup>69</sup>

Presumption is our natural and original infirmity. The frailest and most vulnerable of all creatures is man, and at the same time the most arrogant.<sup>70</sup> He sees and feels himself lodged here in the mud and filth of the world, nailed and riveted to the worst, the deadest and most stagnant part of the universe, at the lowest story of the house and the most remote from the vault of heaven, with the animals of the worst condition of the three; and he goes and sets himself in imagination above the circle of the moon, and brings heaven under his feet.

With this same vanity of imagination he makes himself the equal of God, assumes to himself divine qualities, selects and separates himself from among the multitude of other creatures, carves out their shares to each of his fellows and comrades, the animals, and

64. *Of the Nature of the Gods*, Book I, Chapter 8.

65. *Of the Nature of the Gods*, Book I, Chapter 31.

66. according to Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Anaxagoras*, Book II, Chapter 8.

67. For the notion that the moon is inhabited, Montaigne refers to Plu-

tarch's *Of the Face of the Moon*.

68. *Of Wrath*, Book II, Chapter 9.

69. *City of God*, Book XII, Section 15.

70. The phrase, originally Pliny's, is another of those engraved on the walls of Montaigne's library.

allots to them their portion of faculties and powers according as it seems good to him. How can he know, by the force of his understanding, the secret and internal motions of the animals? By what comparison between them and himself does he suppose them to be as stupid as he thinks?

When I play with my cat, who knows but that she regards me more as a plaything than I do her? [We amuse each other with our respective monkey-tricks; if I have my moments for beginning and refusing, so she has hers.]

Plato,<sup>71</sup> in his picture of the golden age under Saturn, numbers, among the chief advantages of the man of that time, his communion with the beasts, of whom inquiring and learning he knew the real attributes and differences of each of them; whereby he acquired a very perfect understanding and wisdom, and in consequence passed his life very much more happily than we are able to do. Do we need a better proof of the impudence of man where the beasts are concerned? That great author<sup>72</sup> opined that, in giving them their bodily shape, Nature for the most part only considered the use they could be put to in the prognostications which were drawn from them in his time.

That defect which hinders communication between us and them, why may it not as well be in ourselves as in them? It is a matter of conjecture with whom the fault lies that we do not understand one another; for we understand them no more than they do us. By the same reasoning they may regard us as beasts, as we do them.

It is no great wonder if we do not understand them for neither do we understand the Basques<sup>73</sup> and the Troglodytes.<sup>74</sup> Yet some have boasted of understanding them, as Apollonius of Tyana, Melampus, Tiresias, Thales, and others.<sup>75</sup> And since it is the case that, as the cosmographers tell, there are nations that receive a dog for their king, they must needs in some way interpret its voice and actions.

We must observe the parity there is between us. We have some halfway understanding of their meaning, as the animals have of ours, in about the same degree. They cajole us, they threaten us, they entreat us, as we do them. Moreover, it is very evident to us that they are able fully and completely to communicate with one another, that they understand one another, and not only those of the same species, but also those of different species.

71. in his *Statesman*.

72. Plato, in the *Timæus*.

73. inhabitants of the Pyrenees region on the Bay of Biscay, known for the difficulty and peculiarity of their language.

74. cavedwellers.

75. A mixture of mythical and

historical figures: Apollonius of Tyana, Greek neo-Pythagorean philosopher and magician (first century A.D.); Melampus, mythical physician and sage; Tiresias, mythical blind prophet of Thebes; Thales, regarded as the first Greek philosopher (sixth century B.C.), one of the Seven Sages of Greece.

Since even the speechless herds, aye, since  
The very generations of wild beasts  
Are wont dissimilar and diverse sounds  
To rouse from in them, when there's fear or pain,  
And when they burst with joys. (Lucretius.)<sup>76</sup>

A horse knows that a dog is angry when it barks in a certain way, but is not afraid when it gives voice in another way. Even in those creatures that have no voice we may easily infer, from the mutual services we see them rendering each other, that they have some other means of communication; their movements speak and negotiate:

In much the same way as the lack-speech years  
Compel young children into gesturings. (Lucretius.)<sup>77</sup>

Why not? just as well as our deaf-mutes dispute, argue and tell stories by means of signs? I have seen some so skilful and practised in that language, that in truth they did not fall short of perfection in making themselves understood. Lovers use their eyes to express anger, reconciliation, entreaty, thanks, to make appointments, in short for every purpose;

Silence too our thought and wish betrays.  
(Tasso.)<sup>78</sup>

What of the hands? We beg, we promise, we call, we send away, threaten, pray, entreat, deny, refuse, question, wonder, count, confess, repent, we express fear and shame, we doubt, inform, command, incite, encourage, swear, testify, accuse, condemn, absolve, insult, despise, challenge, we show vexation, we flatter, applaud, bless, humiliate, mock, reconcile, recommend, exalt, welcome, rejoice, complain, we express grief, dejection, despair, astonishment, protestation, silence, and what not, in such varied and numerous ways, in rivalry with the tongue.

With the head we invite, we dismiss, admit, disclaim, give the lie, welcome, honour, reverence, disdain, demand, show the door, we cheer, lament, caress, chide, submit, defy, exhort, threaten, assure, and inquire. What of the eye-brows? What of the shoulders? There is no movement that does not speak an intelligible, untaught language, that is understood by all. Which shows that, seeing the variety that distinguishes the spoken languages in use, this one must rather be considered the proper and natural speech of humankind. I pass over that which a particular necessity teaches one who is

76. *On the Nature of Things*, Book V, ll. 1058 ff.

77. *On the Nature of Things*, Book V, ll. 1029 f.

78. Torquato Tasso, in the pastoral drama *Aminta*, Act II, Scene 3, ll. 35-36.

taken unawares; and the finger-alphabet; and grammar and the sciences which are only practised and expressed by gestures; and the nations that Pliny tells of, who have no other language.

An ambassador of the city of Abdera, after speaking at great length to King Agis of Sparta, said to him, 'Well, Sire, what answer do you wish me to carry back to our citizens?' 'That I allowed you to say all that you would and as much as you would, without ever a word.'<sup>79</sup> Was not that a very speaking and intelligible silence?

After all, which of our arts do we not see in the activities of animals? Is there any organization regulated with more order, with a better distribution of charges and functions, and more consistently maintained, than that of the bees? Can we imagine that so well-ordered a disposition of activities and occupations could be carried on without reason and foresight?

Following signs and instances like these,  
Some testify that bees possess a share  
Of the world-spirit and the mind divine. (Virgil.)<sup>80</sup>

Do the swallows that we see at the return of spring, ferreting out all the corners of the houses, conduct their search without judgment? Do they choose without discrimination, out of a thousand places, that which is most commodious for their lodging? Are the birds, when they weave those beautiful and wonderful habitations of theirs, able to use a square figure rather than a round, an obtuse rather than a right angle, without knowing their properties and effects? Do they fetch, now water, now clay, without having concluded that hardness is softened by moisture? Do they line the floors of their palaces with moss or down unless they have foreseen that the tender limbs of their young will lie more softly and comfortably? Do they shelter themselves from the rainy wind and build their cabins to the east, without knowing the different properties of the winds, and without considering that one is more healthy for them than the other?

Why does the spider thicken her web in one place and slacken it in another? Why does she use now one kind of knot, now another, unless she possesses thought, deliberation and the power of inference?

We may see well enough, in most of their works, how much the animals surpass us, and how much we fall short in the art of imitating them. And yet, in our ruder performances, we are sensible of what faculties we employ, and we know that our mind applies to them its utmost powers; why do we not conclude the same of the

79. The story is told by Plutarch in *Apothegms of the Lacedaemonians*.

80. *Georgics*, Book IV, ll. 219 ff.

animals? Why do we ascribe to I know not what slavish instinct of nature those works that excel anything we can do by nature or art? Herein we unconsciously give them a very great advantage over ourselves, in making Nature, with a maternal kindness, to accompany and lead them as it were by the hand, to all the activities and conveniences of their life; whilst us she abandons to chance and fortune, and forces us to seek by art the things necessary for our preservation, at the same time denying us the means of attaining, by any education or mental effort, to the natural skill of the animals. So that their brutish stupidity surpasses in all their contrivances everything we are able to do with our divine intelligence.

Truly, by this reckoning, we might with great reason call her a very unjust stepmother; but that is not so. Our organization is not so formless and unregulated. Nature has been universally kind to all her creatures, and there is none that she has not very amply furnished with all the means necessary for the preservation of its being. For those common complaints that I hear men uttering (as the licence of their opinions now lifts them up above the clouds, now brings them down to the antipodes), that we are the only out-cast animal, bare on the bare earth, bound and tied down, with no means of arming or covering ourselves but with others' spoils; whereas all the other creatures have been clothed by Nature with shells, husks, bark, hair, wool, spikes, leather, down, feathers, scales, fleccc, bristles, according to the need of their being; armed with claws, teeth, horns for attack and defence, and has herself instructed them in what is requisite to each, to swim, run, fly, sing, whilst man cannot even walk or speak, nor eat, nor do anything but weep, without an apprenticeship:

Then again the babe,  
Like to the castaway of the raging surf,  
Lies naked on the ground, speechless, in want  
Of every help for life, when Nature first  
Hath poured him forth upon the shores of light  
With birth-pangs from within the mother's womb,  
And with a plaintive wail he fills the place,—  
As well befitting one for whom remains  
In life a journey through so many ills.  
But all the flocks and herds and all wild beasts  
Come forth and grow, nor need the little rattles,  
Nor must be treated to the humouring nurse's  
Dear broken chatter; nor seek they divers clothes  
To suit the changing skies; nor need, in fine,  
Nor arms, nor lofty ramparts, wherewithal

Their own to guard—because the earth herself  
 And Nature, artificer of the world, bring forth  
 Aboundingly all things for all. (Lucretius.)<sup>81</sup>

These complaints are unfounded; there is in the governance of the world a much greater equality and a more uniform relationship. Our skin is provided as abundantly as theirs with power to resist the inclemency of the weather. Witness the many nations that have not yet tried the use of clothes. Our ancient Gauls wore hardly any clothes, like our neighbours the Irish of the present day, in spite of their cold climate.

But we may judge better by ourselves: for all those parts of our person which we are pleased to expose to the wind and air are adapted to endure it, the feet, the face, the hands, the legs, the shoulders, the head, according to the demands of usage. For if there is in us a tender spot, in which we should seem to fear the cold, it should be the stomach, where digestion takes place; our fathers used to leave it uncovered, and our ladies, soft and delicate as they are, sometimes go half-covered down to the navel.

Nor are the bindings and swaddlings of infants any more necessary. The Lacedemonian mothers reared their children in all freedom to move their limbs, without any wrappings or fastenings.

Our weeping we have in common with most of the other animals; there are hardly any that do not wail and whine long after their birth, seeing that it is a natural effect of their helplessness at that age. As to the habit of eating, it is natural to us as well as to them, and comes without instruction:

For each creature feels  
 By instinct to what use to put its powers.  
 (Lucretius.)<sup>82</sup>

Who doubts but that a child, having acquired the strength to feed himself, is able to seek his food? And the earth yields and offers him enough for his needs, without any cultivation and artifice; and if not at all times, no more does she do it for the animals. Witness the provision we see made by the ants and other creatures, in view of the barren season of the year. Those nations we have lately discovered, so abundantly provided with meat and a natural drink, without care or trouble on their part, have now made us realize that bread is not our only sustenance, and that, without any tilling, our Mother Nature has plentifully provided us with all that we need. Nay, as seems very probable, more amply and richly than she does now that we have taken to meddling with it by our contrivances:

81. *On the Nature of Things*, Book V, ll. 222 ff.

82. *On the Nature of Things*, Book V, ll. 1033 f.

She first, the Earth, of own accord  
The shining grains and vineyards of all joy  
Created for mortality; herself  
Gave the sweet fruitage and the pastures glad,  
Which now to-day yet scarcely wax in size,  
Even when, aided by our toiling arms,  
We break the ox, and wear away the strength  
Of sturdy farm-hands; (Lucretius.)<sup>83</sup>

the excess and unruliness of our appetite outstripping all the inventions wherewith we seek to satisfy it.

With regard to weapons, we are better provided by Nature than most other animals; we are more able to move our limbs about and to extract service from them, naturally and without being taught. Those who are trained to fight naked are seen to rush into dangers just like our own soldiers. If some of the beasts surpass us in this advantage, we surpass many others in the same. We possess by a natural instinct and teaching the skill to fortify our bodies and protect them by acquired means. That this is so is proved by the example of the elephant who sharpens and grinds the teeth which he makes use of in warfare (for he has special teeth which he saves and employs for this purpose only). When bulls go to battle they throw up and scatter the dust around them; the boars whet their tusks; the ichneumon, when it is about to grapple with the crocodile, fortifies its body by coating it all over with a crust of mud, well kneaded and compressed, as with a cuirass. Why shall we not say that it is as natural to us to arm ourselves with wood and iron?

As to speech, it is certain that, if it is not natural neither is it necessary. Nevertheless I believe that a child brought up in complete solitude, far from all intercourse (which would be a difficult experiment to make), would have some kind of speech to express his ideas. And it is not to be believed that Nature has denied us this power which she has given to many other animals; for what else but speech is that faculty we observe in them of complaining, rejoicing, calling to one another for succour, inviting to love, which they do by the use of their voice?

Why should they not speak with one another? They speak to us, and we to them: in how many different tones do we not speak to our dogs? and they answer us. We use another language with them, than we do in talking to birds, pigs, oxen and horses, and give them other names; we change the idiom according to the kind.

So ants amidst their sable-coloured band  
One with another mouth to mouth confer,  
Haply their way or state to understand. (Dante.)<sup>84</sup>

83. *On the Nature of Things*, Book II, ll. 1157 ff.

84. *Purgatory*, Canto XXVI, ll. 34 ff.

Lactantius seems to attribute to beasts not only the power of speech but also of laughter. And the same difference of tongues which, according to the differences of countries, is found in human beings, is also found in animals of the same species. Aristotle, writing on this subject, instances the various calls of partridges, according to locality:

The dappled birds  
Utter at other times far other cries  
Than when they fight for food, or with their prey  
Struggle and strain. And birds there are which change  
With changing weather their own raucous songs.  
(Lucretius.)<sup>85</sup>

But it is yet to be known what language the supposed child would speak; and what has been conjectured about it has no great probability. If any one declares to me, in opposition to this belief, that those deaf by nature do not speak, I reply that it is not only because they have not been taught to speak by ear, but more because the sense of hearing, of which they are deprived, is related to that of speech, and that they hold together by a natural tie; in such a way that the words we speak must in the first place be spoken to ourselves, and be made to strike upon our own inward ears, before being sent out to others' ears.

I have said all this to establish the resemblance to human conditions, and to bring us back and join us to the majority. We are neither superior nor inferior to the rest. All that is under heaven, says the sage, is subject to one law and one fate:

Enshackled in the gruesome bonds of doom.  
(Lucretius.)<sup>86</sup>

Some difference there is; there are orders and degrees, but under the aspect of one same Nature:

But each sole thing  
Proceeds according to its proper wont,  
And all conserve their own distinctions, based  
In Nature's fixed decree. (Lucretius.)<sup>87</sup>

Man must be forced and lined up within the barriers of this organization. The poor wretch has no mind really to step over them. He is shackled and entangled, he is subjected to the same obligation as the other creatures of his order, and is of a very mediocre

85. *On the Nature of Things*, Book V, l. 874.  
V, ll. 1078 ff.

86. *On the Nature of Things*, Book V, l. 921 ff.  
87. *On the Nature of Things*, Book V, ll. 921 ff.



condition, without any real and essential prerogative and pre-eminence. That which he thinks and imagines himself to possess, neither has body nor can it be perceived. And if it be so that he alone of all the animals has this freedom of imagination, this licence of thought, which represents to him that which is, that which is not, that which he wills, the false and the true; it is an advantage sold to him very dearly, and of which he has very little cause to boast. For from it springs the principal source of all the ills that press upon him, sin, sickness, irresolution, affliction, despair.

Of Repentance\*

[“THESE TESTIMONIES OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE”]

Others form man; I describe him, and portray a particular, very ill-made one, who, if I had to fashion him anew, should indeed be very different from what he is. But now it is done.

Now the features of my painting do not err, although they change and vary. The world is but a perennial see-saw. All things in it are incessantly on the swing, the earth, the rocks of the Caucasus, the Egyptian pyramids, both with the common movement and their own particular movement. Even fixedness is nothing but a more sluggish motion.

I cannot fix my object; it is befogged, and reels with a natural intoxication. I seize it at this point, as it is at the moment when I beguile myself with it. I do not portray the thing in itself. I portray the passage; not a passing from one age to another, or, as the people put it, from seven years to seven years,<sup>88</sup> but from day to day, from minute to minute. I must adapt my history to the moment. I may presently change, not only by chance, but also by intention. It is a record of diverse and changeable events, of undecided, and when the occasion arises, contradictory ideas; whether it be that I am another self, or that I grasp a subject in different circumstances and see it from a different point of view. So it may be that I contradict myself, but, as Demades<sup>89</sup> said, the truth I never contradict. If my mind could find a firm footing, I should not speak tentatively, I should decide; it is always in a state of apprenticeship, and on trial.

I am holding up to view a humble and lustreless life; that is all one. Moral philosophy, in any degree, may apply to an ordinary and secluded life as well as to one of richer stuff; every man carries within him the entire form of the human constitution.

Authors communicate themselves to the world by some special and extrinsic mark; I am the first to do so by my general being, as

\* *Essays*, Book III, Chapter 2. The opening part of the essay is reprinted here.

88. an allusion to the popular notion

that the human body is completely renewed every seven years.

89. Greek orator and politician of the fourth century B.C.

Michel de Montaigne, not as a grammarian or a poet or a lawyer. If the world finds fault with me for speaking too much of myself, I find fault with the world for not even thinking of itself.

But is it reasonable that I, who am so retired in actual life, should aspire to make myself known to the public? And is it reasonable that I should show up to the world, where artifice and ceremony enjoy so much credit and authority, the crude and simple results of nature, and of a nature besides very feeble? Is it not like making a wall without stone or a similar material, thus to build a book without learning or art? The ideas of music are guided by art, mine by chance. This I have at least in conformity with rules, that no man ever treated of a subject that he knew and understood better than I do this that I have taken up; and that in this I am the most learned man alive. Secondly, that no man ever penetrated more deeply into his matter, nor more minutely analysed its parts and consequences, nor more fully and exactly reached the goal he had made it his business to set up. To accomplish it I need only bring fidelity to it; and that is here, as pure and sincere as may be found.

I speak the truth, not enough to satisfy myself, but as much as I dare to speak. And I become a little more daring as I grow older; for it would seem that custom allows this age more freedom to prate, and more indiscretion in speaking of oneself. It cannot be the case here, as I often see elsewhere, that the craftsman and his work contradict each other. 'How could a man who shows to such advantage in company write so foolish a book?' or, 'Are these learned writings the work of a man of such feeble conversation?'

When a man of ordinary conversation writes uncommon things, it means that his talent lies in the place from which he borrows them, and not in himself. A learned man is not learned at all things; but the accomplished man is accomplished in all things, even in ignorance.

Here, my book and I go hand in hand together, and keep one pace. In other cases we may commend or censure the work apart from the workman; not so here. Who touches the one touches the other. He who judges the one without knowing the other will wrong himself more than he does me; he who has come to know the work will completely satisfy me. Happy beyond my deserts if I have only this share of public approval, that intelligent persons will be made to feel that I was capable of profiting by learning, if I had any; and that I deserved more assistance from my memory!

In this place let me offer an excuse for what I often repeat, that I seldom repent, and that my conscience is satisfied with itself, not as the conscience of an angel or a horse, but as the conscience of a man; always with the addition of this refrain, not a formal or conventional refrain, but prompted by a real and natural modesty, 'that

I speak as an inquirer and an ignoramus, leaving the decision purely and simply to the common and authorized beliefs.' I do not teach, I relate.

There is no vice, that is really a vice, which is not hurtful and which a sound judgement does not condemn; for its ugliness and evil consequences are so apparent that they are perhaps right who say that it is chiefly begotten of stupidity and ignorance. So hard it is to imagine that a man may know it and not hate it!

Wickedness sucks in the greater part of its own venom, and poisons itself with it.

Vice, like an ulcer in the flesh, leaves a repentance in the soul, which is always scratching itself and drawing blood. For Reason blots out all other grief and sorrow, but begets that of repentance, which is the more hard to bear since it is born from within; as the chill and heat of a fever are more acutely felt than those which are external. I regard as vices (but each according to its measure), not only those which are condemned by reason and Nature, but those too which have been created by human opinion, even false and erroneous opinion, if it is authorized by laws and custom.

There is likewise no goodness in which a well-born nature does not delight. We feel indeed a certain self-congratulation when we do a good deed, which gives us inward satisfaction, and that generous pride which accompanies a good conscience. A boldly wicked soul may perhaps arm itself with assurance; but with that complacency and satisfaction it cannot provide itself.

There is no small pleasure in feeling oneself preserved from the contagion of so corrupt an age, and saying to oneself, 'Should any one look into my very soul, he would yet not find me guilty of the affliction or ruin of any man, or of revenge or envy, of publicly offending against the laws, of innovation or disturbance, or of failing to keep my word. And whatever the licence of the times may permit or suggest to any man, I have laid hands on no Frenchman's property nor dived into his purse. I have never lived but on what is my own, either in war or peace time; and have never used another man's labour without hire.' These testimonies of a good conscience please; and this natural satisfaction is a great boon to us, and the only payment that will never fail us.

## EDMUND SPENSER

(1552?-1599)

## The Faerie Queene\*

[The Bowre of Blisse]

42

Thence passing forth, they shortly do arrive,  
 Whereas the Bowre of Blisse was situate;  
 A place pickt out by choice of best alive,  
 That natures worke by art can imitate,  
 In which what ever in this worldly state  
 Is sweet, and pleasing unto living sense,  
 Or that may dayntiest fantasie aggrate,  
 Was poured forth with plentifull dispenche,  
 And made there to abound with lavish affluence.

5

43

Goodly it was enclosed round about,  
 Aswell their entred guesstes to keepe within,  
 As those unruly beasts to hold without;  
 Yet was the fence thereof but weake and thin;  
 Nought feared their force that fortilage to win,  
 But wisdomes powre, and temperaunces might,  
 By which the mightiest things efforced bin:  
 And cke the gate was wrought of substaunce light,  
 Rather for plesure, then for battery or fight.

10

15

44

Yt framèd was of precious yvory,  
 That seemd a worke of admirable wit;  
 And therein all the famous history  
 Of Jason and Medæa was ywrit;  
 Her mighty charmes, her furious loving fit,  
 His goodly conquest of the golden fleece,  
 His falsèd faith, and love too lightly flit,

20

25

\* Books I-III were published in 1590; Books IV-VI, in 1596. This selection is from Book II, Canto xii.

1. *they*: Sir Guyon, the hero of Book II, who embodies the virtue of temperance; and the palmer, his guide, who represents reason.

7. *aggrate*: gratify.

12. *those unruly beasts*: animals encountered immediately before this episode; allegorical representations of excesses, they were subdued by the

palmer (i.e., reason), who held his magic rod over them.

14. *fortilage*: small fortress.

20. *wit*: skill.

22-36. *Jason . . . Creüsa wed*: Jason, the leader in the conquest of the Golden Fleece, deserted Medæa (Medea) for Creüsa. Medea in revenge killed her sons by Jason, and her wedding gift to Creüsa was the magic garment which burned her to death.

The wondred Argo, which in venturous peece  
First through the Euxine seas bore all the flowr of Greece.

45

Ye might have seene the frothy billowes fry  
Under the ship, as thorough them she went,  
That seemd the waves were into yvory, 30  
Or yvory into the waves were sent;  
And other where the snowy substaunce sprent  
With vermell, like the boyes bloud therein shed,  
A piteous spectacle did represent,  
And otherwhiles, with gold besprinkelèd, 35  
Yt seemd th' enchanted flame, which did Creüsa wed.

46

All this and more might in that goodly gate  
Be red, that ever open stood to all,  
Which thither came; but in the porch there sate  
A comely personage of stature tall, 40  
And semblaunce pleasing more then naturall,  
That travellers to him seemd to entize;  
His looser garment to the ground did fall,  
And flew about his heeles in wanton wize,  
Not fit for speedy pacc or manly exercise. 45

47

They in that place him Genius did call—  
Not that celestiall powre, to whom the care  
Of life, and gencration of all  
That lives, pertaines in charge particulare,  
Who wondrous things concerning our welfare, 50  
And straunge phantomes doth let us oft forsee,  
And oft of secret ill bids us beware—  
That is our selfe, whom though we do not see,  
Yet each doth in him selfe it well perceiue to bee.

48

Therefore a god him sage antiquity 55  
Did wisely make, and good Agdistes call;  
But this same was to that quite contrary,  
The foe of life, that good envyes to all,  
That secretly doth us procure to fall,  
Through guilefull semblaunts, which he makes us see. 60  
He of this gardin had the governall,  
And pleasures porter was devizd to bee,  
Holding a staffe in hand for more formalitee.

26. *wondred*: wonderful. *peece*: piece  
of work; i.e., his ship.  
32. *sprcnt*: sprinkled.

56. *Agdistes*: in Greek mythology,  
a form of the mother-goddess, originally  
androgynous.

49

With diverse flowres he daintily was deckt,  
 And strowèd round about, and by his side 65  
 A mighty mazer bowle of wine was set,  
 As if it had to him bene sacrifice;  
 Wherewith all new-come guests he gratifide:  
 So did he eke Sir Guyon passing by;  
 But he his idle curtesie defide, 70  
 And overthrew his bowle disdainfully,  
 And broke his staffe, with which he charmèd semblants sly.

50

Thus being entred, they behold around  
 A large and spacious plaine, on every side  
 Strowèd with pleasauns, whose faire grassy ground 75  
 Mantled with greene, and goodly beautifide  
 With all the ornaments of Floraes pride,  
 Wherewith her mother Art, as halfe in scorne  
 Of niggard Nature, like a pompous bride  
 Did decke her, and too lavishly adorne, 80  
 When forth from virgin bowre she comes in th' early morne.

51

Thereto the heavens, alwayes joviall,  
 Lookt on them lovely, still in stedfast state,  
 Ne suffred storme nor frost on them to fall,  
 Their tender buds or leaves to violate, 85  
 Nor scorching heat, nor cold intemperate  
 T' afflict the creatures, which therein did dwell;  
 But the milde aire with season moderate  
 Gently attempted, and disposd so well  
 That still it breathèd forth sweet spirit and holcsome smell. 90

52

More sweet and holcsome than the pleasaunt hill  
 Of Rhodope, on which the nimphe that bore  
 A gyaunt babe, her selfe for griefe did kill;  
 Or the Thessalian Tempe, where of yore  
 Faire Daphne Phœbus hart with love did gore; 95  
 Or Ida, where the gods lov'd to repaire,  
 When ever they their heavenly bowres forlore;

66. *mazer bowle*: a drinking bowl made of hard wood.

72. *he charmèd semblants sly*: he magically created fictitious spirits.

75. *pleasauns*: pleasure gardens; compare the French *plaisance*.

82. *joviall*: The word originally implied the influence of the planet Jupiter (*Jove*), which supposedly caused a disposition.

92. *Rhodope*: name both of the mountain and of the nymph who bore to Neptune a giant child, Athos.

95. *Daphne*: Loved and pursued by Apollo (Phœbus), she cried for help, and the river god Peneus, her father, changed her into a laurel tree (see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book I, l. 452).

97. *forlore*: abandoned.

Or sweet Parnasse, the haunt of Muses faire;  
Or Eden selfe, if ought with Eden mote compaire.

53

Much wondred Guyon at the faire aspect 100  
Of that sweet place, yet suffred no delight  
To sincke into his sence, nor mind affect,  
But passèd forth, and lookt still forward right,  
Bridling his will, and maistering his might,  
Till that he came unto another gate— 105  
No gate, but like one, being goodly dight  
With boughes and braunches, which did broad dilate  
Their clasping armes, in wanton wreathings intricate.

54

So fashionèd a porch with rare device, 110  
Archit over head with an embracing vine,  
Whose bounches hanging downe seemed to entice  
All passers by to tast their lushious wine,  
And did themselves into their hands incline,  
As freely offering to be gatherèd,— 115  
Some deepe empurpled as the hyacine,  
Some as the rubine, laughing sweetly red,  
Some like faire emeraudes, not yet well ripenèd.

55

And them amongst, some were of burnisht gold,  
So made by art, to beautifie the rest,  
Which did themselves emongst the leaves enfold, 120  
As lurking from the vew of covetous guest,  
That the weake bowes, with so rich load opprest,  
Did bow adowne, as over-burdenèd,  
Under that porch a comely dame did rest,  
Clad in faire weedes, but fowle disorderèd, 125  
And garments loose, that sceind unmeet for womanhed.

56

In her left hand a cup of gold she held,  
And with her right the riper fruit did reach,  
Whose sappy liquor, that with fulnesse sweld,  
Into her cup she scrused with daintie breach 130  
Of her fine fingers, without fowle empeach,  
That so faire wine-presse made the wine more sweet.  
Thereof she usd to give to drinke to each  
Whom passing by she happenèd to meet:  
It was her guise, all straungers goodly so to greet. 135

115. *hyacine*: hyacinth, a precious stone.

125. *weed*: clothes.

130–131. *she scrused . . . empeach*: She squeezed the fruit daintily and without injuring it.

57

So she to Guyon offred it to tast;  
 Who taking it out of her tender hond,  
 The cup to ground did violently cast,  
 That all in peeces it was broken fond,  
 And with the liquor stained all the lond:  
 Whereat Excesse exceedingly was wroth,  
 Yet no'te the same amend, ne yet withstond,  
 But suffered him to passe, all were she loth;  
 Who nought regarding her displeasure forward goth.

140

58

There the most daintie paradise on ground,  
 It selfe doth offer to his sober eye,  
 In which all pleasures plentiously abound,  
 And nonc does others happinesse envye:  
 The painted flowres, the trees upshooting hyc,  
 The dales for shade, the hilles for breathing space,  
 The trembling groves, the christall running by;  
 And, that which all faire workes doth most agrace,  
 The art, which all that wrought, appeared in no place.

145

150

59

One would have thought (so cunningly the rude  
 And scorned parts were mingled with the fine)  
 That Nature had for wantonnesse ensude  
 Art, and that Art at Nature did repine;  
 So striving each th' other to undermine,  
 Each did the others worke more beautifie;  
 So diff'ring both in willes, agreed in fine:  
 So all agreed through sweete diversitie,  
 This garden to adorne with all varietie.

155

160

60

And in the midst of all, a fountaine stood,  
 Of richest substaunce that on earth might bee,  
 So pure and shiny that the silver flood  
 Through every channell running one might see;  
 Most goodly it with curious imageree  
 Was over-wrought, and shapes of naked boyes,  
 Of which some seemd with lively jollitee  
 To fly about, playing their wanton toyes,  
 Whilost others did them selves embay in liquid joyes.

165

170

142: *no'te*: could not.152-153. *that . . . place*: The idea that the grace of art consists in its being hidden and in giving an appearance of spontaneity and naturalness was

common in the Renaissance (compare Castiglione).

156. *ensude*: followed, imitated.160. *fine*: end, purpose.171. *embay*: bathe.



61

And over all of purest gold was spread  
 A trayle of yvie in his native hew;  
 For the rich mettall was so coloured  
 That wight who did not well avis'd it vew 175  
 Would surely deeme it to be yvie trew;  
 Low his lascivious armes adown did creepe,  
 That themselves dipping in the silver dew  
 Their fleecy flowres they tenderly did steepe,  
 Which drops of christall seemd for wantones to weepe. 180

62

Infinit streames continually did well  
 Out of this fountaine, sweet and faire to see,  
 The which into an ample laver fell,  
 And shortly grew to so great quantitie  
 That like a little lake it seemd to bee; 185  
 Whose depth exceeded not three cubits height,  
 That through the waves one might the bottom see,  
 All pav'd beneath with jasper shining bright,  
 That seemd the fountaine in that sea did sayle upright.

63

And all the margent round about was set 190  
 With shady laurell trees, thence to defend  
 The sunny beames, which on the billowes bet,  
 And those which therein bathed, mote offend.  
 As Guyon hapned by the same to wend,  
 Two naked damzelles he therein espyde, 195  
 Which therein bathing seemd to contend  
 And wrestle wantonly, ne car'd to hyde  
 Their dainty parts from vew of any which them eyde.

64

Sometimes the one would lift the other quight  
 Above the waters, and then downe againe 200  
 Her plong, as over maistered by might,  
 Where both awhile would covered remaine,  
 And each the other from to rise restraine;  
 The whiles their snowy limbes, as through a vele,  
 So through the christall waves appeared plaine; 205  
 Then suddcinly both would themselves unhele,  
 And th' amarus sweet spoiles to greedy eyes revele.

65

As that faire starre, the messenger of morne,  
 His dewy face out of the sea doth reare;

Or as the Cyprian goddesse, newly borne  
 Of th' oceans fruitful froth, did first appeare,—  
 Such seemèd they, and so their yellow heare  
 Christalline humour droppèd downe apace.  
 Whom such when Guyon saw, he drew him neare,  
 And somewhat gan relent his earnest pace,  
 His stubborne brest gan secret pleasaunce to embrace.

210

215

66

The wanton maidens him espying, stood  
 Gazing a while at his unwonted guise;  
 Then th' one her selfe low duckèd in the flood,  
 Abasht, that her a straunger did avise;  
 But th' other rather higher did arise,  
 And her two lilly paps aloft displayd,  
 And all that might his melting hart entise  
 To her delights, she unto him bewrayd:  
 The rest hid underneath, him more desirous made.

220

225

67

With that, the other likewise up arose,  
 And her faire lockes, which formerly were bownd  
 Up in one knot, she low adowne did lose;  
 Which flowing long and thick, her cloth'd around,  
 And th' yvoric in golden mantle gownd;  
 So that faire spectacle from him was reft,  
 Yet that, which reft it, no lesse faire was fownd;  
 So hid in lockes and waves from lookers theft,  
 Nought but her lovely face she for his looking left.

230

68

Withall she laughèd, and she blusht withall,  
 That blushing to her laughter gave more grace,  
 And laughter to her blushing, as did fall;  
 Now when they spide the knight to slacke his pace,  
 Them to behold, and in his sparkling face  
 The secret signes of kindled lust appeare,  
 Their wanton meriments they did cncreece,  
 And to him beckned to approach more neare,  
 And shewd him many sights, that courage cold could reare.

235

240

69

On which when gazing him the palmer saw,  
 He much rebukt those wandring eyes of his,  
 And counseld well, him forward thence did draw.  
 Now are they come nigh to the Bowre of Blis  
 Of her fond favorites so nam'd amis;

245

210. *the Cyprian goddesse*: Venus.213. *Christalline humour*: crystal-clear water.220. *avise*: view, perceive.224. *bewrayd*: revealed243. *courage*: lust.

When thus the palmer: Now, sir, well advise,  
For here the end of all our travell is;  
Here wonnes Acrasia, whom we must surprise,  
Else she will slip away, and all our drift despise.

70

Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound,  
Of all that mote delight a daintie eare,  
Such as attonce might not on living ground, 255  
Save in this paradise, he heard elsewhere:  
Right hard it was for wight which did it heare  
To read what manner musicke that mote bee;  
For all that pleasing is to living eare  
Was there consorted in one harmonce, 260  
Birdes, voyces, instruments, windes, waters, all agree.

71

The joyous birdes shrouded in chearefull shade,  
Their notes unto the voyce attempted sweet;  
Th' angelicall soft trembling voyces made  
To th' instruments divinc response meet; 265  
The silver sounding instruments did meet  
With the base murmure of the waters fall;  
The waters fall with difference discreet,  
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call:  
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all. 270

72

There, whence that musick seemed heard to bee,  
Was the faire witch her selfe now solacing,  
With a new lover, whom through sorcerce  
And witchcraft, she from farre did thither bring;  
There she had him now layd a slombering, 275  
In secret shade, after long wanton joyes,  
Whilst round about them pleasauntly did sing  
Many faire ladies and lascivious boyes,  
That ever mixt their song with light licentious toyes.

73

And all that while, right over him she hong 280  
With her false eyes fast fixed in his sight,  
As seeking medicine, whence she was stong,  
Or greedily depasturing delight;  
And oft inclining downe with kisses light,  
For feare of waking him, his lips bedewd, 285  
And through his humid eyes did sucke his spright,

251. *wonnes*: dwells.

252. *drift*: plan.

268. *discreet*: distinct.

272. *faire witch*: Acrasia.

279. *toyes*: amorous games.

283. *depasturing*: feeding on.

Quite molten into lust and pleasure lewd:  
Wherewith she sighèd soft, as if his case she rewèd.

## 74

The whiles some one did chaunt this lovely lay:

Ah see, who so faire thing doest faine to see, 290

In springing flowre the image of thy day;

Ah see the virgin rose, how sweetly shee

Doth first peepe forth with bashfull modestee,

That fairer seemes, the lesse ye see her may;

Lo see soone after, how more bold and free 295

Her barèd bosome she doth broad display;

Loe see soone after, how she fades, and falles away.

## 75

So passeth, in the passing of a day,

Of mortall life the leafe, the bud, the flowre;

Nc more doth flourish after first decay, 300

That carst was sought to decke both bed and bowre,

Of many a ladic, and many a paramowre:

Gather therefore the rose, whilst yet is prime,

For soone comes age that will her pride deflowre:

Gather the rose of love, whilst yet is time, 305

Whilst loving thou mayst lovèd be with equall crime.

## 76

He ceast, and then gan all the quire of birdes

Their diverse notes t' attune unto his lay,

As in approvance of his pleasing words.

The constant paire heard all that he did say, 310

Yet swarvèd not, but kept their forward way,

Through many covert groves and thickets close,

In which they creeping did at last display

That wanton ladic, with her lover lose,

Whose sleepe head she in her lap did soft dispose. 315

## 77

Upon a bed of roses she was layd,

As faint through heat, or dight to pleasant sin,

And was arayd, or rather disarayd,

All in a vele of silke and silver thin,

That hid no whit her alabaster skin, 320

But rather shewd more white, if more might bee;

More subtile web Arachne can not spin,

290-306. *Ah see . . . crime:* This is a version of a passage in Tasso's description of the garden of the enchantress Armida (*Jerusalem Delivered*, Canto XVI, stanzas 14-16). The motif of "Gather the rose . . . whilst

yet is time" was standard during the Renaissance.

313. *display:* discover.

322. *Arachne:* the clever but irreverent Lydian girl whom the goddess Athene changed into a spider.

Nor the fine nets which oft we woven see  
Of scorched dew, do not in th' aire more lightly flee.

78

Her snowy brest was bare to readie spoyle 325  
Of hungry eies, which n'ote therewith be fild,  
And yet through languour of her late sweet toyle,  
Few drops, more cleare than nectar, forth distild,  
That like pure orient perles adowne it trild,  
And her faire eyes sweet smyling in delight 330  
Moysten'd their fierie beames, with which she thrild  
Fraile harts, yet quenched not—like starry light  
Which sparckling on the silent waves, does secme more bright.

79

The young man sleeping by her seemd to bee  
Some goodly swayne of honorable place, 335  
'That certes it great pittie was to see  
Him his nobilitie so foule deface;  
A sweet regard, and amiable grace,  
Mixed with manly sternnesse did appeare  
Yet sleeping, in his well proportiond face, 340  
And on his tender lips the downy heare  
Did now but freshly spring, and silken blossomes beare.

80

His warlike armes, the idle instruments  
Of sleeping praise, were hong upon a tree,  
And his brave shield, full of old monuments, 345  
Was fowly ra'st, that none the signes might see;  
Ne for them, ne for honour cared hee,  
Ne ought, that did to his advancement tend,  
But in lewd loves, and wastfull luxurie,  
His dayes, his goods, his bodie he did spend: 350  
O horrible enchantment, that him so did blend!

81

The noble elfe, and carefull palmer drew  
So nigh them, minding nought but lustfull game,  
That suddain forth they on them rusht, and threw  
A subtile net, which onely for the same 355  
The skilfull palmer formally did frame.  
So held them under fast, the whiles the rest  
Fled all away for feare of fowler shame.

324. *scorched dew*: The suggested image is gossamer floating after the dew has dried.

329. *trild*: trickled.

345. *moniments*: illustrations recording deeds of valor.

351. *blend*: blind.

355-356. *which . . . frame*: which the skillful palmer expressly made only for that purpose ("onely for the same").

The faire enchauntresse, so unwares opprest,  
Tryde all her arts, and all her sleights, thence out to wrest. 360

82

And eke her lover strove, but all in vaine;  
For that same net so cunningly was wound,  
That neither guile, nor force might it distraine.  
They tooke them both, and both them strongly bound  
In captive bandes, which there they readie found: 365  
But her in chaines of adamant he tyde;  
For nothing else might keepe her safe and sound;  
But Verdant (so he hight) he soone untyde,  
And counsell sage in steed thereof to him applyde.

83

But all those pleasant bowres and pallace brave, 370  
Guyon broke down, with rigour pittillesse;  
Ne ought their goodly workmanship might save  
Them from the tempest of his wrathfulnesse;  
But that their blisse he turn'd to balefulnesse:  
Their groves he feld, their gardins did deface, 375  
Their arbers spoyle, their cabinets suppresses,  
Their banquet houses burne, their buildings race,  
And of the fairest late, now made the fowlest place.

84

Then led they her away, and eke that knight  
They with them led, both sorrowfull and sad; 380  
The way they came, the same retourn'd they right,  
Till they arrivèd, where they lately had  
Charm'd those wild-beasts, that rag'd with furie mad.  
Which now awaking, fierce at them gan fly,  
As in their mistresse reskew, whom they lad; 385  
But them the palmer soone did pacify.  
Then Guyon askt, what meant those beastes, which there did ly.

85

Said he, These seeming beasts are men indeed,  
Whom this enchauntresse hath transformèd thus,  
Whylome her lovers, which her lusts did feed, 390  
Now turnèd into figures hideous,  
According to their mindes like monstrous.  
Sad end (quoth he) of life intemperate,  
And mournfull meed of joyes delicious;  
But palmer, if it mote thee so aggrate, 395  
Let them returnèd be unto their former state.

360. *out to wrest*: struggle out.  
363. *distrains*: pull off.

376. *cabinets*: bowers.  
377. *banquet*: banquet.

Streight way he with his vertuous staffe them strooke,  
 And streight of beasts they comely men became;  
 Yet being men they did unmanly looke,  
 And starèd ghastly, some for inward shame, 490  
 And some for wrath, to see their captive dame;  
 But one above the rest in speciall,  
 That had an hog beene late, hight Grille by name,  
 Repinèd greatly, and did him miscall  
 That had from hoggish forme him brought to naturall. 495

Said Guyon: See the mind of beastly man,  
 That hath so soone forgot the excellence  
 Of his creation, when he life began,  
 That now he chooseth, with vile difference,  
 To be a beast, and lacke intelligence. 498  
 To whom the palmer thus: The donghill kind  
 Delights in filth and foule incontinence;  
 Let Grill be Grill, and have his hoggish mind,  
 But let us hence depart, whilst wether serves and wind.

## MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

(1547-1616)

### Don Quixote, Part I\*

["I Know Who I Am, and Who I May Be, If I Choose"]

#### CHAPTER. I.

*Which treats of the station in life and the pursuits of the famous gentleman, Don Quixote de la Mancha.*

In a village of La Mancha<sup>1</sup> the name of which I have no desire to recall, there lived not so long ago one of those gentlemen who always have a lance in the rack, an ancient buckler, a skinny nag, and a greyhound for the chase. A stew with more beef than mutton in it, chopped meat for his evening meal, scraps for a Saturday, lentils on Friday, and a young pigeon as a special delicacy for Sunday, went to account for three-quarters of his income. The rest of it he laid out on a broadcloth greatcoat and velvet stockings for feast

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New York. Part I was published in 1605; Part II, in 1615.

1. Efforts at identifying the village have proved inconclusive; La Mancha is a section of Spain south of Madrid.

days, with slippers to match, while the other days of the week he cut a figure in a suit of the finest homespun. Living with him were a housekeeper in her forties, a niece who was not yet twenty, and a lad of the field and market place who saddled his horse for him and wielded the pruning knife.

This gentleman of ours was close on to fifty, of a robust constitution but with little flesh on his bones and a face that was lean and gaunt. He was noted for his early rising, being very fond of the hunt. They will try to tell you that his surname was Quijada or Quesada—there is some difference of opinion among those who have written on the subject—but according to the most likely conjectures we are to understand that it was really Quejana. But all this means very little so far as our story is concerned, providing that in the telling of it we do not depart one iota from the truth.

You may know, then, that the aforesaid gentleman, on those occasions when he was at leisure, which was most of the year around, was in the habit of reading books of chivalry with such pleasure and devotion as to lead him almost wholly to forget the life of a hunter and even the administration of his estate. So great was his curiosity and infatuation in this regard that he even sold many acres of tillable land in order to be able to buy and read the books that he loved, and he would carry home with him as many of them as he could obtain.

Of all those that he thus devoured none pleased him so well as the ones that had been composed by the famous Feliciano de Silva,<sup>2</sup> whose lucid prose style and involved conceits were as precious to him as pearls; especially when he came to read those tales of love and amorous challenges that are to be met with in many places, such a passage as the following, for example: "The reason of the unreason that afflicts my reason, in such a manner weakens my reason that I with reason lament me of your comeliness." And he was similarly affected when his eyes fell upon such lines as these: ". . . the high Heaven of your divinity divinely fortifies you with the stars and renders you deserving of that desert your greatness doth deserve."

The poor fellow used to lie awake nights in an effort to disentangle the meaning and make sense out of passages such as these, although Aristotle himself would not have been able to understand them, even if he had been resurrected for that sole purpose. He was not at ease in his mind over those wounds that Don Belianis<sup>3</sup> gave and received; for no matter how great the surgeons who treated him, the poor fellow must have been left with his face and his entire body covered with marks and scars. Nevertheless, he

2. a sixteenth-century author of romances; the quotation which follows is from his *Don Florisel de Niquea*.

3. The allusion is to a romance by Jerónimo Fernández.



was grateful to the author for closing the book with the promise of an interminable adventure to come; many a time he was tempted to take up his pen and literally finish the tale as had been promised, and he undoubtedly would have done so, and would have succeeded at it very well, if his thoughts had not been constantly occupied with other things of greater moment.

He often talked it over with the village curate,<sup>4</sup> who was a learned<sup>5</sup> man, a graduate of Sigüenza, and they would hold long discussions as to who had been the better knight, Palmerin of England or Amadis of Gaul;<sup>6</sup> but Master Nicholas, the barber of the same village, was in the habit of saying that no one could come up to the Knight of Phoebus,<sup>7</sup> and that if anyone *could* compare with him it was Don Galaor, brother of Amadis of Gaul, for Galaor was ready for anything—he was none of your finical knights, who went around whimpering as his brother did, and in point of valor he did not lag behind him.

In short, our gentleman became so immersed in his reading that he spent whole nights from sundown to sunup and his days from dawn to dusk in poring over his books, until, finally, from so little sleeping and so much reading, his brain dried up and he went completely out of his mind. He had filled his imagination with everything that he had read, with enchantments, knightly encounters, battles, challenges, wounds, with tales of love and its torments, and all sorts of impossible things, and as a result had come to believe that all these fictitious happenings were true; they were more real to him than anything else in the world. He would remark that the Cid Ruy Díaz had been a very good knight,<sup>8</sup> but there was no comparison between him and the Knight of the Flaming Sword, who with a single backward stroke had cut in half two fierce and monstrous giants. He preferred Bernardo del Carpio, who at Roncesvalles had slain Roland despite the charm<sup>9</sup> the latter bore, availing himself of the stratagem which Hercules employed when he strangled Antaeus, the son of Earth, in his arms.<sup>10</sup>

He had much good to say for Morgante<sup>11</sup> who, though he belonged to the haughty, overbearing race of giants, was of an affable disposition and well brought up. But, above all, he cherished an admiration for Rinaldo of Montalbán,<sup>11</sup> especially as he beheld him

4. parish priest.

5. ironical, for Sigüenza was the seat of a minor and discredited university.

6. heroes of two very famous romances of chivalry.

7. or Knight of the Sun. Heroes of romances customarily adopted emblematic names and also changed them according to circumstances. See in the following paragraph the reference to the Knight of the Flaming Sword.

8. the magic gift of invulnerability.

9. The mythological Antaeus was invulnerable as long as he maintained contact with his mother, Earth; Hercules killed him while holding him raised in his arms.

10. in Pulci's *Morgante maggiore*, a comic-epic poem of the Italian Renaissance.

11. in Bojardo's *Roland in Love* (*Orlando innamorato*) and Ariosto's *Roland Mad* (*Orlando furioso*), roman-

sallying forth from his castle to rob all those that crossed his path, or when he thought of him overseas stealing the image of Mohammed which, so the story has it, was all of gold. And he would have liked very well to have had his fill of kicking that traitor Galalón,<sup>12</sup> a privilege for which he would have given his house-keeper with his niece thrown into the bargain.

At last, when his wits were gone beyond repair, he came to conceive the strangest idea that ever occurred to any madman in this world. It now appeared to him fitting and necessary, in order to win a greater amount of honor for himself and serve his country at the same time, to become a knight-errant and roam the world on horseback, in a suit of armor; he would go in quest of adventures, by way of putting into practice all that he had read in his books; he would right every manner of wrong, placing himself in situations of the greatest peril such as would redound to the eternal glory of his name. As a reward for his valor and the might of his arm, the poor fellow could already see himself crowned Emperor of Trebizond at the very least; and so, carried away by the strange pleasure that he found in such thoughts as these, he at once set about putting his plan into effect.

The first thing he did was to burnish up some old pieces of armor, left him by his great-grandfather, which for ages had lain in a corner, moldering and forgotten. He polished and adjusted them as best he could, and then he noticed that one very important thing was lacking: there was no closed helmet, but only a morion, or visorless headpiece, with turned up brim of the kind foot soldiers wore. His ingenuity, however, enabled him to remedy this, and he proceeded to fashion out of cardboard a kind of half-helmet, which, when attached to the morion, gave the appearance of a whole one. True, when he went to see if it was strong enough to withstand a good slashing blow, he was somewhat disappointed; for when he drew his sword and gave it a couple of thrusts, he succeeded only in undoing a whole week's labor. The ease with which he had hewed it to bits disturbed him no little, and he decided to make it over. This time he placed a few strips of iron on the inside, and then, convinced that it was strong enough, refrained from putting it to any further test; instead, he adopted it then and there as the finest helmet ever made.

After this, he went out to have a look at his nag; and although the animal had more *cuartos*, or cracks, in its hoof than there are quarters in a real,<sup>13</sup> and more blemishes than Gonela's steed<sup>14</sup>

tic and comic-epic poems of the Italian Renaissance. Rinaldo is Roland's cousin.

12. Ganelon, the villain in the Charlemagne legend who betrayed the French at Roncevalles.

13. a coin (about five cents); a *cuarto* was one eighth of a *real*.

14. Gonela ("il Gonnella") was a jester at the court of Ferrara, seat of the house of Este.

which *tantum pellis et ossa fuit*,<sup>15</sup> it nonetheless looked to its master like a far better horse than Alexander's Bucephalus or the Babieca of the Cid.<sup>16</sup> He spent all of four days in trying to think up a name for his mount; for—so he told himself—seeing that it belonged to so famous and worthy a knight, there was no reason why it should not have a name of equal renown. The kind of name he wanted was one that would at once indicate what the nag had been before it came to belong to a knight-errant and what its present status was; for it stood to reason that, when the master's worldly condition changed, his horse also ought to have a famous, high-sounding appellation, one suited to the new order of things and the new profession that it was to follow.

After he in his memory and imagination had made up, struck out, and discarded many names, now adding to and now subtracting from the list, he finally hit upon "Rocinante," a name that impressed him as being sonorous and at the same time indicative of what the steed had been when it was but a hack, whereas now it was nothing other than the first and foremost of all the hacks<sup>17</sup> in the world.

Having found a name for his horse that pleased his fancy, he then desired to do as much for himself, and this required another week, and by the end of that period he had made up his mind that he was henceforth to be known as Don Quixote, which, as has been stated, has led the authors of this veracious history to assume that his real name must undoubtedly have been Quijada, and not Quesada as others would have it. But remembering that the valiant Amadis was not content to call himself that and nothing more, but added the name of his kingdom and fatherland that he might make it famous also, and thus came to take the name Amadis of Gaul, so our good knight chose to add his place of origin and become "Don Quixote de la Mancha"; for by this means, as he saw it, he was making very plain his lineage and was conferring honor upon his country by taking its name as his own.

And so, having polished up his armor and made the morion over into a closed helmet, and having given himself and his horse a name, he naturally found but one thing lacking still: he must seek out a lady of whom he could become enamored; for a knight-errant without a lady-love was like a tree without leaves or fruit, a body without a soul.

"If," he said to himself, "as a punishment for my sins or by a stroke of fortune I should come upon some giant hereabouts, a thing that very commonly happens to knights-errant, and if I should slay him in a hand-to-hand encounter or perhaps cut him in two,

15. was so much skin and bones.

16. "the chief," Ruy Díaz (see reference on p. 969), celebrated hero of

the twelfth-century *Poema del Cid*.

17. in Spanish, *rocin*.

or, finally, if I should vanquish and subdue him, would it not be well to have someone to whom I may send him as a present, in order that he, if he is living, may come in, fall upon his knees in front of my sweet lady, and say in a humble and submissive tone of voice, 'I, lady, am the giant Caraculiambro, lord of the island Malindrania, who has been overcome in single combat by that knight who never can be praised enough, Don Quixote de la Mancha, the same who sent me to present myself before your Grace that your Highness may dispose of me as you see fit?'

Oh, how our good knight reveled in this speech, and more than ever when he came to think of the name that he should give his lady! As the story goes, there was a very good-looking farm girl who lived near by, with whom he had once been smitten, although it is generally believed that she never knew or suspected it. Her name was Aldonza Lorenzo, and it seemed to him that she was the one upon whom he should bestow the title of mistress of his thoughts. For her he wished a name that should not be incongruous with his own and that would convey the suggestion of a princess or a great lady; and, accordingly, he resolved to call her "Dulcinea del Toboso," she being a native of that place. A musical name to his ears, out of the ordinary and significant, like the others he had chosen for himself and his appurtenances.

## CHAPTER 2

*Which treats of the first sally that the ingenious Don Quixote made from his native heath.*

Having, then, made all these preparations, he did not wish to lose any time in putting his plan into effect, for he could not but blame himself for what the world was losing by his delay, so many were the wrongs that were to be righted, the grievances to be redressed, the abuses to be done away with, and the duties to be performed. Accordingly, without informing anyone of his intention and without letting anyone see him, he set out one morning before daybreak on one of those very hot days in July. Donning all his armor, mounting Rocinante, adjusting his ill-contrived helmet, bracing his shield on his arm, and taking up his lance, he sallied forth by the back gate of his stable yard into the open countryside. It was with great contentment and joy that he saw how easily he had made a beginning toward the fulfillment of his desire.

No sooner was he out on the plain, however, than a terrible thought assailed him, one that all but caused him to abandon the enterprise he had undertaken. This occurred when he suddenly remembered that he had never formally been dubbed a knight, and so, in accordance with the law of knighthood, was not permitted

to bear arms against one who had a right to that title. And even if he had been, as a novice knight he would have had to wear white armor, without any device on his shield, until he should have earned one by his exploits. These thoughts led him to waver in his purpose, but, madness prevailing over reason, he resolved to have himself knighted by the first person he met, as many others had done if what he had read in those books that he had at home was true. And so far as white armor was concerned, he would scour his own the first chance that offered until it shone whiter than any ermine. With this he became more tranquil and continued on his way, letting his horse take whatever path it chose, for he believed that therein lay the very essence of adventures.

And so we find our newly fledged adventurer jogging along and talking to himself. "Undoubtedly," he is saying, "in the days to come, when the true history of my famous deeds is published, the learned chronicler who records them, when he comes to describe my first sally so early in the morning, will put down something like this: 'No sooner had the rubicund Apollo spread over the face of the broad and spacious earth the gilded filaments of his beauteous locks, and no sooner had the little singing birds of painted plumage greeted with their sweet and mellifluous harmony the coming of the Dawn, who, leaving the soft couch of her jealous spouse, now showed herself to mortals at all the doors and balconies of the horizon that bounds La Mancha—no sooner had this happened than the famous knight, Don Quixote de la Mancha, forsaking his own downy bed and mounting his famous steed, Rocinante, fared forth and began riding over the ancient and famous Campo de Montiel.'"<sup>18</sup>

And this was the truth, for he was indeed riding over that stretch of plain.

"O happy age and happy century," he went on, "in which my famous exploits shall be published, exploits worthy of being engraved in bronze, sculptured in marble, and depicted in paintings for the benefit of posterity. O wise magician, whoever you be, to whom shall fall the task of chronicling this extraordinary history of mine! I beg of you not to forget my good Rocinante, eternal companion of my wayfarings and my wanderings."

Then, as though he really had been in love: "O Princess Dulcinea, lady of this captive heart! Much wrong have you done me in thus sending me forth with your reproaches and sternly commanding me not to appear in your beauteous presence. O lady, deign to be mindful of this your subject who endures so many woes for the love of you."

And so he went on, stringing together absurdities, all of a kind

18. famous because it had been the scene of a battle in 1369.

that his books had taught him, imitating insofar as he was able the language of their authors. He rode slowly, and the sun came up so swiftly and with so much heat that it would have been sufficient to melt his brains if he had had any. He had been on the road almost the entire day without anything happening that is worthy of being set down here; and he was on the verge of despair, for he wished to meet someone at once with whom he might try the valor of his good right arm. Certain authors say that his first adventure was that of Puerto Lápice, while others state that it was that of the windmills; but in this particular instance I am in a position to affirm what I have read in the annals of La Mancha; and that is to the effect that he went all that day until nightfall, when he and his hack found themselves tired to death and famished. Gazing all around him to see if he could discover some castle or shepherd's hut where he might take shelter and attend to his pressing needs, he caught sight of an inn not far off the road along which they were traveling, and this to him was like a star guiding him not merely to the gates, but rather, let us say, to the palace of redemption. Quickening his pace, he came up to it just as night was falling.

By chance there stood in the doorway two lasses of the sort known as "of the district"; they were on their way to Seville in the company of some mule drivers who were spending the night in the inn. Now, everything that this adventurer of ours thought, saw, or imagined seemed to him to be directly out of one of the story-books he had read, and so, when he caught sight of the inn, it at once became a castle with its four turrets and its pinnacles of gleaming silver, not to speak of the drawbridge and moat and all the other things that are commonly supposed to go with a castle. As he rode up to it, he accordingly reined in Rocinante and sat there waiting for a dwarf to appear upon the battlements and blow his trumpet by way of announcing the arrival of a knight. The dwarf, however, was slow in coming, and as Rocinante was anxious to reach the stable, Don Quixote drew up to the door of the hostelry and surveyed the two merry maidens, who to him were a pair of beauteous damsels or gracious ladies taking their ease at the castle gate.

And then a swineherd came along, engaged in rounding up his drove of hogs—for, without any apology, that is what they were. He gave a blast on his horn to bring them together, and this at once became for Don Quixote just what he wished it to be: some dwarf who was heralding his coming; and so it was with a vast deal of satisfaction that he presented himself before the ladies in question, who, upon beholding a man in full armor like this, with lance

and buckler, were filled with fright and made as if to flee indoors. Realizing that they were afraid, Don Quixote raised his pasteboard visor and revealed his withered, dust-covered face.

"Do not flee, your Ladyships," he said to them in a courteous manner and gentle voice. "You need not fear that any wrong will be done you, for it is not in accordance with the order of knight-hood which I profess to wrong anyone, much less such highborn damsels as your appearance shows you to be."

The girls looked at him, endeavoring to scan his face, which was half hidden by his ill-made visor. Never having heard women of their profession called damsels before, they were unable to restrain their laughter, at which Don Quixote took offense.

"Modesty," he observed, "well becomes those with the dower of beauty, and, moreover, laughter that has not good cause is a very foolish thing. But I do not say this to be discourteous or to hurt your feelings; my only desire is to serve you."

The ladies did not understand what he was talking about, but felt more than ever like laughing at our knight's unprepossessing figure. This increased his annoyance, and there is no telling what would have happened if at that moment the innkeeper had not come out. He was very fat and very peaceably inclined; but upon sighting this grotesque personage clad in bits of armor that were quite as oddly matched as were his bridle, lance, buckler, and corselet, mine host was not at all indisposed to join the lasses in their merriment. He was suspicious, however, of all this paraphernalia and decided that it would be better to keep a civil tongue in his head.

"If, Sir Knight," he said, "your Grace desires a lodging, aside from a bed—for there is none to be had in this inn—you will find all else that you may want in great abundance."

When Don Quixote saw how humble the governor of the castle was—for he took the innkeeper and his inn to be no less than that—he replied, "For me, Sir Castellan,<sup>19</sup> anything will do, since

Arms are my only ornament,  
My only rest the fight, etc."

The landlord thought that the knight had called him a castellan because he took him for one of those worthies of Castile, whereas the truth was, he was an Andalusian from the beach of Sanlúcar, no less a thief than Cacus<sup>20</sup> himself, and as full of tricks as a student or a page boy.

19. The original, *castellano*, means both "castellan" and "Castilian."

20. In Roman mythology he stole some of the cattle of Hercules, conceal-

ing the theft by having them walk backward into his cave, but was finally discovered and slain.

"In that case," he said,

"Your bed will be the solid rock,  
Your sleep: to watch all night.

This being so, you may be assured of finding beneath this roof enough to keep you awake for a whole year, to say nothing of a single night."

With this, he went up to hold the stirrup for Don Quixote, who encountered much difficulty in dismounting, not having broken his fast all day long. The knight then directed his host to take good care of his steed, as it was the best piece of horseflesh in all the world. The innkeeper looked it over, and it did not impress him as being half as good as Don Quixote had said it was. Having stabled the animal, he came back to see what his guest would have and found the latter being relieved of his armor by the damsels, who by now had made their peace with the new arrival. They had already removed his breastplate and backpiece but had no idea how they were going to open his gorget or get his improvised helmet off. That piece of armor had been tied on with green ribbons which it would be necessary to cut, since the knots could not be undone, but he would not hear of this, and so spent all the rest of that night with his headpiece in place, which gave him the weirdest, most laughable appearance that could be imagined.

Don Quixote fancied that these wenches who were assisting him must surely be the chatelaine and other ladies of the castle, and so proceeded to address them very gracefully and with much wit:

"Never was knight so served  
By any noble dame  
As was Don Quixote  
When from his village he came,  
With damsels to wait on his every need  
While princesses cared for his hack . . .

"By hack," he explained, "is meant my steed Rocinante, for that is his name, and mine is Don Quixote de la Mancha. I had no intention of revealing my identity until my exploits done in your service should have made me known to you; but the necessity of adapting to present circumstances that old ballad of Lancelot has led to your becoming acquainted with it prematurely. However, the time will come when your Ladyships shall command and I will obey and with the valor of my good right arm show you how eager I am to serve you."

The young women were not used to listening to speeches like this and had not a word to say, but merely asked him if he desired to eat anything.



"I could eat a bite of something, yes," replied Don Quixote. "Indeed, I feel that a little food would go very nicely just now."

He thereupon learned that, since it was Friday, there was nothing to be had in all the inn except a few portions of codfish, which in Castile is called *abadejo*, in Andalusia *bacalao*, in some places *cure-dillo*, and elsewhere *truchuella* or small trout. Would his Grace, then, have some small trout, seeing that was all there was that they could offer him?

"If there are enough of them," said Don Quixote, "they will take the place of a trout, for it is all one to me whether I am given in change eight reales or one piece of eight. What is more, those small trout may be like veal, which is better than beef, or like kid, which is better than goat. But however that may be, bring them on at once, for the weight and burden of arms is not to be borne without inner sustenance."

Placing the table at the door of the hostelry, in the open air, they brought the guest a portion of badly soaked and worse cooked codfish and a piece of bread as black and moldy as the suit of armor that he wore. It was a mirth-provoking sight to see him eat, for he still had his helmet on with his visor fastened, which made it impossible for him to put anything into his mouth with his hands, and so it was necessary for one of the girls to feed him. As for giving him anything to drink, that would have been out of the question if the innkeeper had not hollowed out a reed, placing one end in Don Quixote's mouth while through the other end he poured the wine. All this the knight bore very patiently rather than have them cut the ribbons of his helmet.

At this point a gelder of pigs approached the inn, announcing his arrival with four or five blasts on his horn, all of which confirmed Don Quixote in the belief that this was indeed a famous castle, for what was this if not music that they were playing for him? The fish was trout, the bread was of the finest, the wenches were ladies, and the innkeeper was the castellan. He was convinced that he had been right in his resolve to sally forth and roam the world at large, but there was one thing that still distressed him greatly, and that was the fact that he had not as yet been dubbed a knight; as he saw it, he could not legitimately engage in any adventure until he had received the order of knighthood.

### CHAPTER 3

*Of the amusing manner in which Don Quixote had himself dubbed a knight.*

Wearied of his thoughts, Don Quixote lost no time over the scanty repast which the inn afforded him. When he had finished,

he summoned the landlord and, taking him out to the stable, closed the doors and fell on his knees in front of him.

"Never, valiant knight," he said, "shall I arise from here until you have courteously granted me the boon I seek, one which will redound to your praise and to the good of the human race."

Seeing his guest at his feet and hearing him utter such words as these, the innkeeper could only stare at him in bewilderment, not knowing what to say or do. It was in vain that he entreated him to rise, for Don Quixote refused to do so until his request had been granted.

"I expected nothing less of your great magnificence, my lord," the latter then continued, "and so I may tell you that the boon I asked and which you have so generously conceded me is that tomorrow morning you dub me a knight. Until that time, in the chapel of this your castle, I will watch over my armor, and when morning comes, as I have said, that which I so desire shall then be done, in order that I may lawfully go to the four corners of the earth in quest of adventures and to succor the needy, which is the chivalrous duty of all knights-errant such as I who long to engage in deeds of high emprise."

The innkeeper, as we have said, was a sharp fellow. He already had a suspicion that his guest was not quite right in the head, and he was now convinced of it as he listened to such remarks as these. However, just for the sport of it, he determined to humor him; and so he went on to assure Don Quixote that he was fully justified in his request and that such a desire and purpose was only natural on the part of so distinguished a knight as his gallant bearing plainly showed him to be.

He himself, the landlord added, when he was a young man, had followed the same honorable calling. He had gone through various parts of the world seeking adventures, among the places he had visited being the Percheles of Málaga, the Isles of Riarán, the District of Seville, the Little Market Place of Segovia, the Olivera of Valencia, the Rondilla of Granada, the beach of Sanlúcar, the Horse Fountain of Cordova, the Small Taverns of Toledo, and numerous other localities<sup>21</sup> where his nimble feet and light fingers had found much exercise. He had done many wrongs, cheated many widows, ruined many maidens, and swindled not a few minors until he had finally come to be known in almost all the courts and tribunals that are to be found in the whole of Spain.

At last he had retired to his castle here, where he lived upon his own income and the property of others: and here it was that he received all knights-errant of whatever quality and condition, simply

21. All the places mentioned were reputed to be haunts of robbers and rogues.

out of the great affection that he bore them and that they might share with him their possessions in payment of his good will. Unfortunately, in this castle there was no chapel where Don Quixote might keep watch over his arms, for the old chapel had been torn down to make way for a new one; but in case of necessity, he felt quite sure that such a vigil could be maintained anywhere, and for the present occasion the courtyard of the castle would do; and then in the morning, please God, the requisite ceremony could be performed and his guest be duly dubbed a knight, as much a knight as anyone ever was.

He then inquired if Don Quixote had any money on his person, and the latter replied that he had not a cent, for in all the story-books he had never read of knights-errant carrying any. But the inn-keeper told him he was mistaken on this point: supposing the authors of those stories had not set down the fact in black and white, that was because they did not deem it necessary to speak of things as indispensable as money and a clean shirt, and one was not to assume for that reason that those knights-errant of whom the books were so full did not have any. He looked upon it as an absolute certainty that they all had well-stuffed purses, that they might be prepared for any emergency; and they also carried shirts and a little box of ointment for healing the wounds that they received.

For when they had been wounded in combat on the plains and in desert places, there was not always someone at hand to treat them, unless they had some skilled enchanter for a friend who then would succor them, bringing to them through the air, upon a cloud, some damsel or dwarf bearing a vial of water of such virtue that one had but to taste a drop of it and at once his wounds were healed and he was as sound as if he had never received any.

But even if this was not the case, knights in times past saw to it that their squires were well provided with money and other necessities, such as lint and ointment for healing purposes; and if they had no squires—which happened very rarely—they themselves carried these objects in a pair of saddlebags very cleverly attached to their horses' croups in such a manner as to be scarcely noticeable, as if they held something of greater importance than that, for among the knights-errant saddlebags as a rule were not favored. Accordingly, he would advise the novice before him, and inasmuch as the latter was soon to be his godson, he might even command him, that henceforth he should not go without money and a supply of those things that have been mentioned, as he would find that they came in useful at a time when he least expected it.

Don Quixote promised to follow his host's advice punctiliously; and so it was arranged that he should watch his armor in a large barnyard at one side of the inn. He gathered up all the pieces,

placed them in a horse trough that stood near the well, and, bracing his shield on his arm, took up his lance and with stately demeanor began pacing up and down in front of the trough even as night was closing in.

The innkeeper informed his other guests of what was going on, of Don Quixote's vigil and his expectation of being dubbed a knight; and, marveling greatly at so extraordinary a variety of madness, they all went out to see for themselves and stood there watching from a distance. For a while the knight-to-be, with tranquil mien, would merely walk up and down; then, leaning on his lance, he would pause to survey his armor, gazing fixedly at it for a considerable length of time. As has been said, it was night now, but the brightness of the moon, which well might rival that of Him who lent it, was such that everything the novice knight did was plainly visible to all.

At this point one of the mule drivers who were stopping at the inn came out to water his drove, and in order to do this it was necessary to remove the armor from the trough.

As he saw the man approaching, Don Quixote cried out to him, "O bold knight, whoever you may be, who thus would dare to lay hands upon the accouterments of the most valiant man of arms that ever girded on a sword, look well what you do and desist if you do not wish to pay with your life for your insolence!"

The muleteer gave no heed to these words—it would have been better for his own sake had he done so—but, taking it up by the straps, tossed the armor some distance from him. When he beheld this, Don Quixote rolled his eyes heavenward and with his thoughts apparently upon his Dulcinea exclaimed, "Succor, O lady mine, this vassal heart in this my first encounter; let not your favor and protection fail me in the peril in which for the first time I now find myself."

With these and other similar words, he loosed his buckler, grasped his lance in both his hands, and let the mule driver have such a blow on the head that the man fell to the ground stunned; and had it been followed by another one, he would have had no need of a surgeon to treat him. Having done this, Don Quixote gathered up his armor and resumed his pacing up and down with the same calm manner as before. Not long afterward, without knowing what had happened—for the first muleteer was still lying there unconscious—another came out with the same intention of watering his mules, and he too was about to remove the armor from the trough when the knight, without saying a word or asking favor of anyone, once more adjusted his buckler and raised his lance, and if he did not break the second mule driver's head to bits, he made more than three pieces of it by dividing it into quarters. At the

sound of the fracas everybody in the inn came running out, among them the innkeeper; whereupon Don Quixote again lifted his buckler and laid his hand on his sword.

"O lady of beauty," he said, "strength and vigor of this fainting heart of mine! Now is the time to turn the eyes of your greatness upon this captive knight of yours who must face so formidable an adventure."

By this time he had worked himself up to such a pitch of anger that if all the mulc drivers in the world had attacked him he would not have taken one step backward. The comrades of the wounded men, seeing the plight those two were in, now began showering stones on Don Quixote, who shielded himself as best he could with his buckler, although he did not dare stir from the trough for fear of leaving his armor unprotected. The landlord, meanwhile, kept calling for them to stop, for he had told them that this was a madman who would be sure to go free even though he killed them all. The knight was shouting louder than ever, calling them knaves and traitors. As for the lord of the castle, who allowed knights-errant to be treated in this fashion, he was a lowborn villain, and if he, Don Quixote, had but received the order of knighthood, he would make him pay for his treachery.

"As for you others, vile and filthy rabble, I take no account of you; you may stone me or come forward and attack me all you like; you shall see what the reward of your folly and insolence will be."

He spoke so vigorously and was so undaunted in bearing as to strike terror in those who would assail him; and for this reason, and owing also to the persuasions of the innkeeper, they ceased stoning him. He then permitted them to carry away the wounded, and went back to watching his armor with the same tranquil, unconcerned air that he had previously displayed.

The landlord was none too well pleased with these mad pranks on the part of his guest and determined to confer upon him that accursed order of knighthood before something else happened. Going up to him, he begged Don Quixote's pardon for the insolence which, without his knowledge, had been shown the knight by those of low degree. They, however, had been well punished for their impudence. As he had said, there was no chapel in this castle, but for that which remained to be done there was no need of any. According to what he had read of the ceremonial of the order, there was nothing to this business of being dubbed a knight except a slap on the neck and one across the shoulder, and that could be performed in the middle of a field as well as anywhere else. All that was required was for the knight-to-be to keep watch over his armor for a couple of hours, and Don Quixote had been at it more than four. The latter believed all this and announced that he was ready

to obey and get the matter over with as speedily as possible. Once dubbed a knight, if he were attacked one more time, he did not think that he would leave a single person in the castle alive, save such as he might command be spared, at the bidding of his host and out of respect to him.

Thus warned, and fearful that it might occur, the castellan brought out the book in which he had jotted down the hay and barley for which the mule drivers owed him, and, accompanied by a lad bearing the butt of a candle and the two aforesaid damsels, he came up to where Don Quixote stood and commanded him to kneel. Reading from the account book—as if he had been saying a prayer—he raised his hand and, with the knight's own sword, gave him a good thwack upon the neck and another lusty one upon the shoulder, muttering all the while between his teeth. He then directed one of the ladies to gird on Don Quixote's sword, which she did with much gravity and composure; for it was all they could do to keep from laughing at every point of the ceremony, but the thought of the knight's prowess which they had already witnessed was sufficient to restrain their mirth.

"May God give your Grace much good fortune," said the worthy lady as she attached the blade, "and prosper you in battle."

Don Quixote thereupon inquired her name, for he desired to know to whom it was he was indebted for the favor he had just received, that he might share with her some of the honor which his strong right arm was sure to bring him. She replied very humbly that her name was Tolosa and that she was the daughter of a shoemaker, a native of Toledo who lived in the stalls of Sancho Bienaya.<sup>22</sup> To this the knight replied that she would do him a very great favor if from then on she would call herself Doña Tolosa, and she promised to do so. The other girl then helped him on with his spurs, and practically the same conversation was repeated. When asked her name, she stated that it was La Molinera and added that she was the daughter of a respectable miller of Antequera. Don Quixote likewise requested her to assume the "don" and become Doña Molinera and offered to render her further services and favors.

These unheard-of ceremonics having been dispatched in great haste, Don Quixote could scarcely wait to be astride his horse and sally forth on his quest for adventures. Saddling and mounting Rocinante, he embraced his host, thanking him for the favor of having dubbed him a knight and saying such strange things that it would be quite impossible to record them here. The innkeeper, who was only too glad to be rid of him, answered with a speech that was no less flowery, though somewhat shorter, and he did not so much as ask him for the price of a lodging, so glad was he to see him go.

22. an old square in Toledo.

CHAPTER 4

*Of what happened to our knight when he sallied forth from the inn.*

Day was dawning when Don Quixote left the inn, so well satisfied with himself, so gay, so exhilarated, that the very girths of his steed all but burst with joy. But remembering the advice which his host had given him concerning the stock of necessary provisions that he should carry with him, especially money and shirts, he decided to turn back home and supply himself with whatever he needed, and with a squire as well; he had in mind a farmer who was a neighbor of his, a poor man and the father of a family but very well suited to fulfill the duties to squire to a man of arms. With this thought in mind he guided Rocinante toward the village once more, and that animal, realizing that he was homeward bound, began stepping out at so lively a gait that it seemed as if his feet barely touched the ground.

The knight had not gone far when from a hedge on his right hand he heard the sound of faint moans as of someone in distress.

"Thanks be to Heaven," he at once exclaimed, "for the favor it has shown me by providing me so soon with an opportunity to fulfill the obligations that I owe to my profession, a chance to pluck the fruit of my worthy desires. Those, undoubtedly, are the cries of someone in distress, who stands in need of my favor and assistance."

Turning Rocinante's head, he rode back to the place from which the cries appeared to be coming. Entering the wood, he had gone but a few paces when he saw a mare attached to an oak, while bound to another tree was a lad of fifteen or thereabouts, naked from the waist up. It was he who was uttering the cries, and not without reason, for there in front of him was a lusty farmer with a girdle who was giving him many lashes, each one accompanied by a reproof and a command, "Hold your tongue and keep your eyes open"; and the lad was saying, "I won't do it again, sir; by God's Passion, I won't do it again. I promise you that after this I'll take better care of the flock."

When he saw what was going on, Don Quixote was very angry. "Discourteous knight," he said, "it ill becomes you to strike one who is powerless to defend himself. Mount your steed and take your lance in hand"—for there was a lance leaning against the oak to which the mare was tied—"and I will show you what a coward you are."

The farmer, seeing before him this figure all clad in armor and brandishing a lance, decided that he was as good as done for. "Sir

Knight," he said, speaking very mildly, "this lad that I am punishing here is my servant; he tends a flock of sheep which I have in these parts and he is so careless that every day one of them shows up missing. And when I punish him for his carelessness or his roguery, he says it is just because I am a miser and do not want to pay him the wages that I owe him, but I swear to God and upon my soul that he lies."

"It is you who lie, base lout," said Don Quixote, "and in my presence; and by the sun that gives us light, I am minded to run you through with this lance. Pay him and say no more about it, or else, by the God who rules us, I will make an end of you and annihilate you here and now. Release him at once."

The farmer hung his head and without a word untied his servant. Don Quixote then asked the boy how much his master owed him. For nine months' work, the lad told him, at seven reales the month. The knight did a little reckoning and found that this came to sixty-three reales; whereupon he ordered the farmer to pay over the money immediately, as he valued his life. The cowardly bumpkin replied that, facing death as he was and by the oath that he had sworn—he had not sworn any oath as yet—it did not amount to as much as that; for there were three pairs of shoes which he had given the lad that were to be deducted and taken into account, and a real for two blood-lettings when his servant was ill.

"That," said Don Quixote, "is all very well; but let the shoes and the blood-lettings go for the undeserved lashings which you have given him; if he has worn out the leather of the shoes that you paid for, you have taken the hide off his body, and if the barber<sup>23</sup> let a little blood for him when he was sick, you have done the same when he was well; and so far as that goes, he owes you nothing."

"But the trouble is, Sir Knight, that I have no money with me. Come along home with me, Andrés, and I will pay you real for real."<sup>24</sup>

"I go home with him!" cried the lad. "Never in the world! No, sir, I would not even think of it; for once he has me alone he'll flay me like a St. Bartholomew."

"He will do nothing of the sort," said Don Quixote. "It is sufficient for me to command, and he out of respect will obey. Since he has sworn to me by the order of knighthood which he has received, I shall let him go free and I will guarantee that you will be paid."

"But look, your Grace," the lad remonstrated, "my master is no knight; he has never received any order of knighthood whatsoever. He is Juan Haldudo, a rich man and a resident of Quintanar."

23. Barbers were also surgeons.

24. See footnote 13.



"That makes little difference," declared Don Quixote, "for there may well be knights among the Haldudos, all the more so in view of the fact that every man is the son of his works."

"That is true enough," said Andrés, "but this master of mine—of what works is he the son, seeing that he refuses me the pay for my sweat and labor?"

"I do not refuse you, brother Andrés," said the farmer. "Do me the favor of coming with me, and I swear to you by all the orders of knighthood that there are in this world to pay you, as I have said, real for real, and perfumed at that."

"You can dispense with the perfume," said Don Quixote; "just give him the reales and I shall be satisfied. And see to it that you keep your oath, or by the one that I myself have sworn I shall return to seek you out and chastise you, and I shall find you though you be as well hidden as a lizard. In case you would like to know who it is that is giving you this command in order that you may feel the more obliged to comply with it, I may tell you that I am the valorous Don Quixote de la Mancha, righter of wrongs and injustices; and so, God be with you, and do not fail to do as you have promised, under that penalty that I have pronounced."

As he said this, he put spurs to Rocinante and was off. The farmer watched him go, and when he saw that Don Quixote was out of the wood and out of sight, he turned to his servant, Andrés.

"Come here, my son," he said. "I want to pay you what I owe you as that righter of wrongs has commanded me."

"Take my word for it," replied Andrés, "your Grace would do well to observe the command of that good knight—may he live a thousand years; for as he is valorous and a righteous judge, if you don't pay me then, by Roque,<sup>25</sup> he will come back and do just what he said!"

"And I will give you my word as well," said the farmer; "but seeing that I am so fond of you, I wish to increase the debt, that I may owe you all the more." And with this he seized the lad's arm and bound him to the tree again and flogged him within an inch of his life. "There, Master Andrés, you may call on that righter of wrongs if you like and you will see whether or not he rights this one. I do not think I have quite finished with you yet, for I have a good mind to flay you alive as you feared."

Finally, however, he unbound him and told him he might go look for that judge of his to carry out the sentence that had been pronounced. Andrés left, rather down in the mouth, swearing that he would indeed go look for the brave Don Quixote de la Mancha; he would relate to him everything that had happened, point by

25. The origin of the oath is unknown.

point, and the farmer would have to pay for it seven times over. But for all that, he went away weeping, and his master stood laughing at him.

Such was the manner in which the valorous knight righted this particular wrong. Don Quixote was quite content with the way everything had turned out; it seemed to him that he had made a very fortunate and noble beginning with his deeds of chivalry, and he was very well satisfied with himself as he jogged along in the direction of his native village, talking to himself in a low voice all the while.

"Well may'st thou call thyself fortunate today, above all other women on earth, O fairest of the fair, Dulcinea del Toboso! Seeing that it has fallen to thy lot to hold subject and submissive to thine every wish and pleasure so valiant and renowned a knight as Don Quixote de la Mancha is and shall be, who, as everyone knows, yesterday received the order of knighthood and this day has righted the greatest wrong and grievance that injustice ever conceived or cruelty ever perpetrated, by snatching the lash from the hand of the merciless foeman who was so unreasonably flogging that tender child."

At this point he came to a road that forked off in four directions, and at once he thought of those crossroads where knights-errant would pause to consider which path they should take. By way of imitating them, he halted there for a while; and when he had given the subject much thought, he slackened Rocinante's rein and let the hack follow its inclination. The animal's first impulse was to make straight for its own stable. After they had gone a couple of miles or so Don Quixote caught sight of what appeared to be a great throng of people, who, as was afterward learned, were certain merchants of Toledo on their way to purchase silk at Murcia. There were six of them altogether with their sunshades, accompanied by four attendants on horseback and three mule drivers on foot.

No sooner had he sighted them than Don Quixote imagined that he was on the brink of some fresh adventure. He was eager to imitate those passages at arms of which he had read in his books, and here, so it seemed to him, was one made to order. And so, with bold and knightly bearing, he settled himself firmly in the stirrups, couched his lance, covered himself with his shield, and took up a position in the middle of the road, where he paused to wait for those other knights-errant (for such he took them to be) to come up to him. When they were near enough to see and hear plainly, Don Quixote raised his voice and made a haughty gesture.

"Let everyone," he cried, "stand where he is, unless everyone will confess that there is not in all the world a more beauteous damsel

than the Empress of La Mancha, the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso."

Upon hearing these words and beholding the weird figure who uttered them, the merchants stopped short. From the knight's appearance and his speech they knew at once that they had to deal with a madman; but they were curious to know what was meant by that confession that was demanded of them, and one of their number who was somewhat of a jester and a very clever fellow raised his voice.

"Sir Knight," he said, "we do not know who this beauteous lady is of whom you speak. Show her to us, and if she is as beautiful as you say, then we will right willingly and without any compulsion confess the truth as you have asked of us."

"If I were to show her to you," replied Don Quixote, "what merit would there be in your confessing a truth so self-evident? The important thing is for you, without seeing her, to believe, confess, affirm, swear, and defend that truth. Otherwise, monstrous and arrogant creatures that you are, you shall do battle with me. Come on, then, one by one, as the order of knighthood prescribes; or all of you together, if you will have it so, as is the sorry custom of those of your breed. Come on, and I will await you here, for I am confident that my cause is just."

"Sir Knight," responded the merchant, "I beg your Grace, in the name of all the princes here present, in order that we may not have upon our consciences the burden of confessing a thing which we have never seen nor heard, and one, moreover, so prejudicial to the empresses and queens of Alcarria and Estremadura,<sup>26</sup> that your Grace will show us some portrait of this lady, even though it be no larger than a grain of wheat, for by the thread one comes to the ball of yarn; and with this we shall remain satisfied and assured, and your Grace will likewise be content and satisfied. The truth is, I believe that we are already so much of your way of thinking that though it should show her to be blind of one eye and distilling vermilion and brimstone from the other, nevertheless, to please your Grace, we would say in her behalf all that you desire."

"She distills nothing of the sort, infamous rabble!" shouted Don Quixote, for his wrath was kindling now. "I tell you, she does not distill what you say at all, but amber and civet wrapped in cotton;<sup>27</sup> and she is neither one-eyed nor hunchbacked but straighter than a spindle that comes from Guadarrama. You shall pay for the great blasphemy which you have uttered against such a beauty as is my lady!"

26. ironical, since both were known as particularly backward regions.

27. a musky substance used as perfume, imported from Africa in cotton packings.

Saying this, he came on with lowered lance against the one who had spoken, charging with such wrath and fury that if fortune had not caused Rocinante to stumble and fall in mid-career, things would have gone badly with the merchant and he would have paid for his insolent gibe. As it was, Don Quixote went rolling over the plain for some little distance, and when he tried to get to his feet, found that he was unable to do so, being too encumbered with his lance, shield, spurs, helmet, and the weight of that ancient suit of armor.

"Do not flee, cowardly ones," he cried even as he struggled to rise. "Stay, cravens, for it is not my fault but that of my steed that I am stretched out here."

One of the muleteers, who must have been an ill-natured lad, upon hearing the poor fallen knight speak so arrogantly, could not refrain from giving him an answer in the ribs. Going up to him, he took the knight's lance and broke it into bits, and then with a companion proceeded to belabor him so mercilessly that in spite of his armor they milled him like a hopper of wheat. The merchants called to them not to lay on so hard, saying that was enough and they should desist, but the mule driver by this time had warmed up to the sport and would not stop until he had vented his wrath, and, snatching up the broken pieces of the lance, he began hurling them at the wretched victim as he lay there on the ground. And through all this tempest of sticks that rained upon him Don Quixote never once closed his mouth nor ceased threatening Heaven and earth and these ruffians, for such he took them to be, who were thus mishandling him.

Finally the lad grew tired, and the merchants went their way with a good story to tell about the poor fellow who had had such a cudgeling. Finding himself alone, the knight endeavored to see if he could rise; but if this was a feat that he could not accomplish when he was sound and whole, how was he to achieve it when he had been thrashed and pounded to a pulp? Yet nonetheless he considered himself fortunate; for as he saw it, misfortunes such as this were common to knights-errant, and he put all the blame upon his horse; and if he was unable to rise, that was because his body was so bruised and battered all over.

## CHAPTER 5

*In which is continued the narrative of the misfortune that befell our knight.*

Seeing, then, that he was indeed unable to stir, he decided to fall back upon a favorite remedy of his, which was to think of some passage or other in his books; and as it happened, the one that he

in his madness now recalled was the story of Baldwin and the Marquis of Mantua, when Carloto left the former wounded upon the mountainside,<sup>28</sup> a tale that is known to children, not unknown to young men, celebrated and believed in by the old, and, for all of that, not any truer than the miracles of Mohammed. Moreover, it impressed him as being especially suited to the straits in which he found himself; and, accordingly, with a great show of feeling, he began rolling and tossing on the ground as he feebly gasped out the lines which the wounded knight of the wood is supposed to have uttered:

“Where art thou, lady mine,  
That thou dost not grieve for my woe?  
Either thou art disloyal,  
Or my grief thou dost not know.”

He went on reciting the old ballad until he came to the following verses:

“O noble Marquis of Mantua,  
My uncle and liege lord true!”

He had reached this point when down the road came a farmer of the same village, a neighbor of his, who had been to the mill with a load of wheat. Seeing a man lying there stretched out like that, he went up to him and inquired who he was and what was the trouble that caused him to utter such mournful complaints. Thinking that this must undoubtedly be his uncle, the Marquis of Mantua, Don Quixote did not answer but went on with his recitation of the ballad, giving an account of the Marquis' misfortunes and the amours of his wife and the emperor's son, exactly as the ballad has it.

The farmer was astounded at hearing all these absurdities, and after removing the knight's visor which had been battered to pieces by the blows it had received, the good man bathed the victim's face, only to discover, once the dust was off, that he knew him very well.

“Señor Quijana,” he said (for such must have been Don Quixote's real name when he was in his right senses and before he had given up the life of a quiet country gentleman to become a knight-errant), “who is responsible for your Grace's being in such a plight as this?”

But the knight merely went on with his ballad in response to all the questions asked of him. Perceiving that it was impossible to obtain any information from him, the farmer as best he could relieved him of his breastplate and backpiece to see if he had any wounds, but there was no blood and no mark of any sort. He then tried to lift him from the ground, and with a great deal of effort finally

28. The allusion is to an old ballad about Charlemagne's son Charlot (Carloto) wounding Baldwin, nephew of the Marquis of Mantua.

managed to get him astride the ass, which appeared to be the easier mount for him. Gathering up the armor, including even the splinters from the lance, he made a bundle and tied it on Rocinante's back, and, taking the horse by the reins and the ass by the halter, he started out for the village. He was worried in his mind at hearing all the foolish things that Don Quixote said, and that individual himself was far from being at ease. Unable by reason of his bruises and his soreness to sit upright on the donkey, our knight-errant kept sighing to Heaven, which led the farmer to ask him once more what it was that ailed him.

It must have been the devil himself who caused him to remember those tales that seemed to fit his own case; for at this point he forgot all about Baldwin and recalled Abindarráez, and how the governor of Antequera, Rodrigo de Narváez, had taken him prisoner and carried him off captive to his castle. Accordingly, when the countryman turned to inquire how he was and what was troubling him, Don Quixote replied with the very same words and phrases that the captive Abindarráez used in answering Rodrigo, just as he had read in the story *Diana* of Jorge de Montemayor,<sup>29</sup> where it is all written down, applying them very aptly to the present circumstances as the farmer went along cursing his luck for having to listen to such a lot of nonsense. Realizing that his neighbor was quite mad, he made haste to reach the village that he might not have to be annoyed any longer by Don Quixote's tiresome harangue.

"Señor Don Rodrigo de Narváez," the knight was saying, "I may inform your Grace that this beautiful Jarifa of whom I speak is not the lovely Dulcinea del Toboso, in whose behalf I have done, am doing, and shall do the most famous deeds of chivalry that ever have been or will be seen in all the world."

"But, sir," replied the farmer, "sinner that I am, cannot your Grace see that I am not Don Rodrigo de Narváez nor the Marquis of Mantua, but Pedro Alonso, your neighbor? And your Grace is neither Baldwin nor Abindarráez but a respectable gentleman by the name of Señor Quijana."

"I know who I am," said Don Quixote, "and who I may be, if I choose: not only those I have mentioned but all the Twelve Peers of France and the Nine Worthies<sup>30</sup> as well; for the exploits of all of them together, or separately, cannot compare with mine."

With such talk as this they reached their destination just as night was falling; but the farmer decided to wait until it was a little darker

29. The reference is to the tale of the love of Abindarráez, a captive Moor, for the beautiful Jarifa (mentioned in the following paragraph), contained in the second edition of *Diana*, the pastoral romance by Jorge de Montemayor.

30. In the French medieval epics the Twelve Peers (Roland, Olivier, and so

on) were warriors all equal in rank forming a sort of guard of honor around Charlemagne. The Nine Worthies, in a tradition originating in France, were nine famous figures, three biblical, three classical, and three Christian (David, Hector, Alexander, Charlemagne, and so on).

in order that the badly battered gentleman might not be seen arriving in such a condition and mounted on an ass. When he thought the proper time had come, they entered the village and proceeded to Don Quixote's house, where they found everything in confusion. The curate and the barber were there, for they were great friends of the knight, and the housekeeper was speaking to them.

"Señor Licentiate Pero Pérez," she was saying, for that was the manner in which she addressed the curate, "what does your Grace think could have happened to my master? Three days now, and not a word of him, nor the hack, nor the buckler, nor the lance, nor the suit of armor. Ah, poor me! I am as certain as I am that I was born to die that it is those cursed books of chivalry he is always reading that have turned his head; for now that I recall, I have often heard him muttering to himself that he must become a knight-errant and go through the world in search of adventures. May such books as those be consigned to Satan and Barabbas,<sup>31</sup> for they have sent to perdition the finest mind in all La Mancha."

The niece was of the same opinion. "I may tell you, Señor Master Nicholas," she said, for that was the barber's name, "that many times my uncle would sit reading those impious tales of misadventure for two whole days and nights at a stretch; and when he was through, he would toss the book aside, lay his hand on his sword, and begin slashing at the walls. When he was completely exhausted, he would tell us that he had just killed four giants as big as castle towers, while the sweat that poured off him was blood from the wounds that he had received in battle. He would then drink a big jug of cold water, after which he would be very calm and peaceful, saying that the water was the most precious liquid which the wise Esquife, a great magician and his friend, had brought to him. But I blame myself for everything. I should have advised your Worships of my uncle's nonsensical actions so that you could have done something about it by burning those damnable books of his before things came to such a pass; for he has many that ought to be burned as if they were heretics."

"I agree with you," said the curate, "and before tomorrow's sun has set there shall be a public *auto de fe*, and those works shall be condemned to the flames that they may not lead some other who reads them to follow the example of my good friend."

Don Quixote and the farmer overheard all this, and it was then that the latter came to understand the nature of his neighbor's affliction.

"Open the door, your Worships," the good man cried. "Open for Sir Baldwin and the Marquis of Mantua, who comes badly

31. the thief whose release, rather than that of Jesus Christ, the crowd requested when Pilate, conforming to

Passover custom, was ready to have one prisoner set free.

wounded, and for Señor Abindarráez the Moor whom the valiant Rodrigo de Narváez, governor of Antequera, brings captive."

At the sound of his voice they all ran out, recognizing at once friend, master, and uncle, who as yet was unable to get down off the donkey's back. They all ran up to embrace him.

"Wait, all of you," said Don Quixote, "for I am sorely wounded through fault of my steed. Bear me to my couch and summon, if it be possible, the wise Urganda to treat and care for my wounds."

"There!" exclaimed the housekeeper. "Plague take it! Did not my heart tell me right as to which foot my master limped on? To bed with your Grace at once, and we will take care of you without sending for that Urganda of yours. A curse, I say, and a hundred other curses, on those books of chivalry that have brought your Grace to this."

And so they carried him off to bed, but when they went to look for his wounds, they found none at all. He told them it was all the result of a great fall he had taken with Rocinante, his horse, while engaged in combating ten giants, the hugest and most insolent that were ever heard of in all the world.

"Tut, tut," said the curate. "So there are giants in the dance now, are there? Then, by the sign of the cross, I'll have them burned before nightfall tomorrow."

They had a thousand questions to put to Don Quixote, but his only answer was that they should give him something to eat and let him sleep, for that was the most important thing of all; so they humored him in this. The curate then interrogated the farmer at great length concerning the conversation he had had with his neighbor. The peasant told him everything, all the absurd things their friend had said when he found him lying there and afterward on the way home, all of which made the licentiate more anxious than ever to do what he did the following day,<sup>32</sup> when he summoned Master Nicholas and went with him to Don Quixote's house.

### [Fighting the Windmills]

#### CHAPTER 7

*Of the second sally of our good knight, Don Quixote de la Mancha.*

. . . After that he remained at home very tranquilly for a couple of weeks, without giving sign of any desire to repeat his former madness. During that time he had the most pleasant conversations with his two old friends, the curate and the barber, on the point he had raised to the effect that what the world needed most was knights-errant and a revival of chivalry. The curate would occasionally contradict him and again would give in, for it was only by means

32. What he and the barber did was to burn most of Don Quixote's library.



of this artifice that he could carry on a conversation with him at all.

In the meanwhile Don Quixote was bringing his powers of persuasion to bear upon a farmer who lived near by, a good man—if this title may be applied to one who is poor—but with very few wits in his head. The short of it is, by pleas and promises, he got the hapless rustic to agree to ride forth with him and serve him as his squire. Among other things, Don Quixote told him that he ought to be more than willing to go, because no telling what adventure might occur which would win them an island, and then he (the farmer) would be left to be the governor of it. As a result of these and other similar assurances, Sancho Panza forsook his wife and children and consented to take upon himself the duties of squire to his neighbor.

Next, Don Quixote set out to raise some money, and by selling this thing and pawning that and getting the worst of the bargain always, he finally scraped together a reasonable amount. He also asked a friend of his for the loan of a buckler and patched up his broken helmet as well as he could. He advised his squire, Sancho, of the day and hour when they were to take the road and told him to see to laying in a supply of those things that were most necessary, and, above all, not to forget the saddlebags. Sancho replied that he would see to all this and added that he was also thinking of taking along with him a very good ass that he had, as he was not much used to going on foot.

With regard to the ass, Don Quixote had to do a little thinking, trying to recall if any knight-errant had ever had a squire thus asininely mounted. He could not think of any, but nevertheless he decided to take Sancho with the intention of providing him with a nobler steed as soon as occasion offered; he had but to appropriate the horse of the first discourteous knight he met. Having furnished himself with shirts and all the other things that the innkeeper had recommended, he and Panza rode forth one night unseen by anyone and without taking leave of wife and children, housekeeper or niece. They went so far that by the time morning came they were safe from discovery had a hunt been started for them.

Mounted on his ass, Sancho Panza rode along like a patriarch, with saddlebags and flask, his mind set upon becoming governor of that island that his master had promised him. Don Quixote determined to take the same route and road over the Campo de Montiel that he had followed on his first journey; but he was not so uncomfortable this time, for it was early morning and the sun's rays fell upon them slantingly and accordingly did not tire them too much.

"Look, Sir Knight-errant," said Sancho, "your Grace should not

forget that island you promised me; for no matter how big it is, I'll be able to govern it right enough."

"I would have you know, friend Sancho Panza," replied Don Quixote, "that among the knights-errant of old it was a very common custom to make their squires governors of the islands or the kingdoms that they won, and I am resolved that in my case so pleasing a usage shall not fall into desuetude. I even mean to go them one better; for they very often, perhaps most of the time, waited until their squires were old men who had had their fill of serving their masters during bad days and worse nights, whereupon they would give them the title of count, or marquis at most, of some valley or province more or less. But if you live and I live, it well may be that within a week I shall win some kingdom with others dependent upon it, and it will be the easiest thing in the world to crown you king of one of them. You need not marvel at this, for all sorts of unforeseen things happen to knights like me, and I may readily be able to give you even more than I have promised."

"In that case," said Sancho Panza, "if by one of those miracles of which your Grace was speaking I should become king, I would certainly send for Juana Gutiérrez, my old lady, to come and be my queen, and the young ones could be infants."

"There is no doubt about it," Don Quixote assured him.

"Well, I doubt it," said Sancho, "for I think that even if God were to rain kingdoms upon the earth, no crown would sit well on the head of Mari Gutiérrez,<sup>33</sup> for I am telling you, sir, as a queen she is not worth two maravedis. She would do better as a countess, God help her."

"Leave everything to God, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "and he will give you whatever is most fitting; but I trust you will not be so pusillanimous as to be content with anything less than the title of viceroy."

"That I will not," said Sancho Panza, "especially seeing that I have in your Grace so illustrious a master who can give me all that is suitable to me and all that I can manage."

## CHAPTER 8

*Of the good fortune which the valorous Don Quixote had in the terrifying and never-before-imagined adventure of the windmills, along with other events that deserve to be suitably recorded.*

At this point they caught sight of thirty or forty windmills which were standing on the plain there, and no sooner had Don Quixote laid eyes upon them than he turned to his squire and said, "Fortune

33. Sancho's wife; she is called Juana Gutiérrez a few lines earlier.

is guiding our affairs better than we could have wished; for you see there before you, friend Sancho Panza, some thirty or more lawless giants with whom I mean to do battle. I shall deprive them of their lives, and with the spoils from this encounter we shall begin to enrich ourselves; for this is righteous warfare, and it is a great service to God to remove so accursed a breed from the face of the earth."

"What giants?" said Sancho Panza.

"Those that you see there," replied his master, "those with the long arms some of which are as much as two leagues in length."

"But look, your Grace, those are not giants but windmills, and what appear to be arms are their wings which, when whirled in the breeze, cause the millstone to go."

"It is plain to be seen," said Don Quixote, "that you have had little experience in this matter of adventures. If you are afraid, go off to one side and say your prayers while I am engaging them in fierce, unequal combat."

Saying this, he gave spurs to his steed Rocinante, without paying any heed to Sancho's warning that these were truly windmills and not giants that he was riding forth to attack. Nor even when he was close upon them did he perceive what they really were, but shouted at the top of his lungs, "Do not seek to flee, cowards and vile creatures that you are, for it is but a single knight with whom you have to deal!"

At that moment a little wind came up and the big wings began turning.

"Though you flourish as many arms as did the giant Briareus,"<sup>34</sup> said Don Quixote when he perceived this, "you still shall have to answer to me."

He thereupon commended himself with all his heart to his lady Dulcinea, beseeching her to succor him in this peril; and, being well covered with his shield and with his lance at rest, he bore down upon them at a full gallop and fell upon the first mill that stood in his way, giving a thrust at the wing, which was whirling at such a speed that his lance was broken into bits and both horse and horseman went rolling over the plain, very much battered indeed. Sancho upon his donkey came hurrying to his master's assistance as fast as he could, but when he reached the spot, the knight was unable to move, so great was the shock with which he and Rocinante had hit the ground.

"God help us!" exclaimed Sancho, "did I not tell your Grace to look well, that those were nothing but windmills, a fact which no one could fail to see unless he had other mills of the same sort in his head?"

34. mythological giant with a hundred arms.

"Be quiet, friend Sancho," said Don Quixote. "Such are the fortunes of war, which more than any other are subject to constant change. What is more, when I come to think of it, I am sure that this must be the work of that magician Frestón, the one who robbed me of my study and my books,<sup>35</sup> and who has thus changed the giants into windmills in order to deprive me of the glory of overcoming them, so great is the enmity that he bears me; but in the end his evil arts shall not prevail against this trusty sword of mine."

"May God's will be done," was Sancho Panza's response. And with the aid of his squire the knight was once more mounted on Rocinante, who stood there with one shoulder half out of joint. And so, speaking of the adventure that had just befallen them, they continued along the Puerto Lápice highway; for there, Don Quixote said, they could not fail to find many and varied adventures, this being a much traveled thoroughfare. . . .

[*Fighting the Sheep*]

CHAPTER 18

*In which is set forth the conversation that Sancho Panza had with his master, Don Quixote, along with other adventures deserving of record.*

. . . Don Quixote caught sight down the road of a large cloud of dust that was drawing nearer.

"This, O Sancho," he said, turning to his squire, "is the day when you shall see the boon that fate has in store for me; this, I repeat, is the day when, as well as on any other, shall be displayed the valor of my good right arm. On this day I shall perform deeds that will be written down in the book of fame for all centuries to come. Do you see that dust cloud rising there, Sancho? That is the dust stirred up by a vast army marching in this direction and composed of many nations."

"At that rate," said Sancho, "there must be two of them, for there is another one just like it on the other side."

Don Quixote turned to look and saw that this was so. He was overjoyed by the thought that these were indeed two armies about to meet and clash in the middle of the broad plain; for at every hour and every moment his imagination was filled with battles, enchantments, nonsensical adventures, tales of love, amorous challenges, and the like, such as he had read of in the books of chivalry, and every word he uttered, every thought that crossed his mind, every act he performed, had to do with such things as these. The dust clouds he had sighted were raised by two large droves of sheep

35. Don Quixote had promptly attributed the ruin of his library, per-

formed by the curate and the barber, to magical intervention.

coming along the road in opposite directions, which by reason of the dust were not visible until they were close at hand, but Don Quixote insisted so earnestly that they were armies that Sancho came to believe it.

"Sir," he said, "what are we to do?"

"What are we to do?" echoed his master. "Favor and aid the weak and needy. I would inform you, Sancho, that the one coming toward us is led and commanded by the great emperor Alifanfarón, lord of the great isle of Trapobana. This other one at my back is that of his enemy, the king of the Garamantas, Pentapolín of the Rolled-up Sleeve, for he always goes into battle with his right arm bare."

"But why are they such enemies?" Sancho asked.

"Because," said Don Quixote, "this Alifanfarón is a terrible pagan and in love with Pentapolín's daughter, who is a very beautiful and gracious lady and a Christian, for which reason her father does not wish to give her to the pagan king unless the latter first abjures the law of the false prophet, Mohammed, and adopts the faith that is Pentapolín's own."

"Then, by my beard," said Sancho, "if Pentapolín isn't right, and I am going to aid him all I can."

"In that," said Don Quixote, "you will only be doing your duty; for to engage in battles of this sort you need not have been dubbed a knight."

"I can understand that," said Sancho, "but where are we going to put this ass so that we will be certain of finding him after the fray is over? As for going into battle on such a mount, I do not think that has been done up to now."

"That is true enough," said Don Quixote. "What you had best do with him is to turn him loose and run the risk of losing him; for after we emerge the victors we shall have so many horses that even Rocinante will be in danger of being exchanged for another. But listen closely to what I am about to tell you, for I wish to give you an account of the principal knights that are accompanying these two armies; and in order that you may be the better able to see and take note of them, let us retire to that hillock over there which will afford us a very good view."

They then stationed themselves upon a slight elevation from which they would have been able to see very well the two droves of sheep that Don Quixote took to be armies if it had not been for the blinding clouds of dust. In spite of this, however, the worthy gentleman contrived to behold in his imagination what he did not see and what did not exist in reality.

Raising his voice, he went on to explain, "That knight in the gilded armor that you see there, bearing upon his shield a crowned

lion crouched at the feet of a damsel, is the valiant Laurcalco, lord of the Silver Bridge; the other with the golden flowers on his armor, and on his shield three crowns argent on an azure field, is the dread Micocolembó, grand duke of Quirocia. And that one on Micocolembó's right hand, with the limbs of a giant, is the ever undaunted Brandabararán de Boliche, lord of the three Arabias. He goes armored in a serpent's skin and has for shield a door which, so report has it, is one of those from the temple that Samson pulled down, that time when he avenged himself on his enemies with his own death.

"But turn your eyes in this direction, and you will behold at the head of the other army the ever victorious, never vanquished Timonel de Carcajona, prince of New Biscay, who comes with quartered arms—azure, vert, argent, and or—and who has upon his shield a cat or on a field tawny, with the inscription *Miau*, which is the beginning of his lady's name; for she, so it is said, is the peerless Miulina, daughter of Alfeñiquén, duke of Algarve. And that one over there, who weights down and presses the loins of that powerful charger, in a suit of snow-white armor with a white shield that bears no device whatever—he is a novice knight of the French nation, called Pierres Papin, lord of the baronies of Utrique. As for him you see digging his iron spurs into the flanks of that fleet-footed zebra courser and whose arms are vairs azure, he is the mighty duke of Nervia, Espartafilardo of the Wood, who has for device upon his shield an asparagus plant with a motto in Castilian that says '*Rastrea mi suerte.*'"<sup>36</sup>

In this manner he went on naming any number of imaginary knights on either side, describing on the spur of the moment their arms, colors, devices, and mottoes; for he was completely carried away by his imagination and by this unheard-of madness that had laid hold of him.

Without pausing, he went on, "This squadron in front of us is composed of men of various nations. There are those who drink the sweet waters of the famous Xanthus; woodsmen who tread the Massilian plain; those that sift the fine gold nuggets of Arabia Felix; those that are so fortunate as to dwell on the banks of the clear-running Thermodon, famed for their coolness; those who in many and diverse ways drain the golden Pactolus; Numidians, whose word is never to be trusted; Persians, with their famous bows and arrows; Medes and Parthians, who fight as they flee; Scythians, as cruel as they are fair of skin; Ethiopians, with their pierced lips; and an infinite number of other nationalities whose visages I see and recognize although I cannot recall their names.

36. probably a pun on *rastrear*: the meaning of the motto may be either "On

Fortune's track" or "My Fortune creeps."

"In this other squadron come those that drink from the crystal currents of the olive-bearing Betis; those that smooth and polish their faces with the liquid of the ever rich and gilded Tagus; those that enjoy the beneficial waters of the divine Genil; those that roam the Tartessian plains with their abundant pasturage; those that disport themselves in the Elysian meadows of Jerez; the men of La Mancha, rich and crowned with golden ears of corn; others clad in iron garments, ancient relics of the Gothic race; those that bathe in the Pisuerga, noted for the mildness of its current; those that feed their herds in the wide-spreading pasture lands along the banks of the winding Guadiana, celebrated for its underground course;<sup>37</sup> those that shiver from the cold of the wooded Pyrenees or dwell amid the white peaks of the lofty Apennines—in short, all those whom Europe holds within its girth."

So help me God! How many provinces, how many nations did he not mention by name, giving to each one with marvelous readiness its proper attributes; for he was wholly absorbed and filled to the brim with what he had read in those lying books of his! Sancho Panza hung on his words, saying nothing, merely turning his head from time to time to have a look at those knights and giants that his master was pointing out to him; but he was unable to discover any of them.

"Sir," he said, "may I go to the devil if I see a single man, giant, or knight of all those that your Grace is talking about. Who knows? Maybe it is another spell, like last night."<sup>38</sup>

"How can you say that?" replied Don Quixote. "Can you not hear the neighing of the horses, the sound of trumpets, the roll of drums?"

"I hear nothing," said Sancho, "except the bleating of sheep."

And this, of course, was the truth; for the flocks were drawing near.

"The trouble is, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "you are so afraid that you cannot see or hear properly; for one of the effects of fear is to disturb the senses and cause things to appear other than what they are. If you are so craven as all that, go off to one side and leave me alone, and I without your help will assure the victory to that side to which I lend my aid."

Saying this, he put spurs to Rocinante and, with his lance at rest, darted down the hillside like a flash of lightning.

As he did so, Sancho called after him, "Come back, your Grace, Señor Don Quixote; I vow to God those are sheep that you are charging. Come back! O wretched father that bore me! What madness is this? Look you, there are no giants, nor knights, nor cats, nor shields either quartered or whole, nor vairs azure or bedeviled.

37. The Guadiana does run underground part of the way through La Mancha.

38. The inn where they had spent the previous night had been pronounced by Don Quixote an enchanted castle.

What is this you are doing, O sinner that I am in God's sight?"

But all this did not cause Don Quixote to turn back. Instead, he rode on, crying out at the top of his voice, "Ho, knights, those of you who follow and fight under the banners of the valiant Pentapolín of the Rolled-up Sleeves; follow me, all of you, and you shall see how easily I give you revenge on your enemy, Alifanfarón of Trapobana."

With these words he charged into the middle of the flock of sheep and began spearing at them with as much courage and boldness as if they had been his mortal enemies. The shepherds and herdsmen who were with the animals called to him to stop; but seeing it was no use, they unloosed their slings and saluted his ears with stones as big as your first.

Don Quixote paid no attention to the missiles and, dashing about here and there, kept crying, "Where are you, haughty Alifanfarón? Come out to me; for here is a solitary knight who desires in single combat to test your strength and deprive you of your life, as a punishment for that which you have done to the valorous Pentapolín Garamanta."

At that instant a pebble from the brook struck him in the side and buried a couple of ribs in his body. Believing himself dead or badly wounded, and remembering his potion, he took out his vial, placed it to his mouth, and began to swallow the balm; but before he had had what he thought was enough, there came another almond, which struck him in the hand, crushing the tin vial and carrying away with it a couple of grinders from his mouth, as well as badly mashing two of his fingers. As a result of these blows the poor knight tumbled from his horse. Believing that they had killed him, the shepherds hastily collected their flock and, picking up the dead beasts, of which there were more than seven, they went off down the road without more ado.

Sancho all this time was standing on the slope observing the insane things that his master was doing; and as he plucked savagely at his beard he cursed the hour and minute when luck had brought them together. But when he saw him lying there on the ground and perceived that the shepherds were gone, he went down the hill and came up to him, finding him in very bad shape though not unconscious.

"Didn't I tell you, Señor Don Quixote," he said, "that you should come back, that those were not armies you were charging but flocks of sheep?"

"This," said Don Quixote, "is the work of that thieving magician, my enemy, who thus counterfeits things and causes them to disappear. You must know, Sancho, that it is very easy for them to



make us assume any appearance that they choose; and so it is that malign one who persecutes me, envious of the glory he saw me about to achieve in this battle, changed the squadrons of the foe into flocks of sheep. If you do not believe me, I beseech you on my life to do one thing for me, that you may be undeceived and discover for yourself that what I say is true. Mount your ass and follow them quietly, and when you have gone a short way from here, you will see them become their former selves once more; they will no longer be sheep but men exactly as I described them to you in the first place. But do not go now, for I need your kind assistance; come over here and have a look and tell me how many grinders are missing, for it feels as if I did not have a single one left."

["To Right Wrongs and Come to the Aid  
of the Wretched"]

CHAPTER 22

*Of how Don Quixote freed many unfortunate ones who, much against their will, were being taken where they did not wish to go.*

Cid Hamete Benengeli, the Arabic and Manchegan<sup>39</sup> author, in the course of this most grave, high-sounding, minute, delightful, and imaginative history,<sup>40</sup> informs us that, following the remarks that were exchanged between Don Quixote de la Mancha and Sancho Panza, his squire, . . . the knight looked up and saw coming toward them down the road which they were following a dozen or so men on foot, strung together by their necks like beads on an iron chain and all of them wearing handcuffs. They were accompanied by two men on horseback and two on foot, the former carrying wheel-lock muskets while the other two were armed with swords and javelins.

"That," said Sancho as soon as he saw them, "is a chain of galley slaves, people on their way to the galleys where by order of the king they are forced to labor."

"What do you mean by 'forced'?" asked Don Quixote. "Is it possible that the king uses force on anyone?"

"I did not say that," replied Sancho. "What I did say was that these are folks who have been condemned for their crimes to forced labor in the galleys for his Majesty the King."

"The short of it is," said the knight, "whichever way you put it, these people are being taken there by force and not of their own free will."

"That is the way it is," said Sancho.

39. of La Mancha.

40. In the tradition of the romances,

Cervantes pretends that he is taking his story from an earlier chronicle.

"Well, in that case," said his master, "now is the time for me to fulfill the duties of my calling, which is to right wrongs and come to the aid of the wretched."

"But take note, your Grace," said Sancho, "that justice, that is to say, the king himself, is not using any force upon, or doing any wrong to, people like these, but is merely punishing them for the crimes they have committed."

The chain of galley slaves had come up to them by this time, whereupon Don Quixote very courteously requested the guards to inform him of the reason or reasons why they were conducting these people in such a manner as this. One of the men on horseback then replied that the men were prisoners who had been condemned by his Majesty to serve in the galleys, whither they were bound, and that was all there was to be said about it and all that he, Don Quixote, need know.

"Nevertheless," said the latter, "I should like to inquire of each one of them, individually, the cause of his misfortune." And he went on speaking so very politely in an effort to persuade them to tell him what he wanted to know that the other mounted guard finally said, "Although we have here the record and certificate of sentence of each one of these wretches, we have not the time to get them out and read them to you; and so your Grace may come over and ask the prisoners themselves, and they will tell you if they choose, and you may be sure that they will, for these fellows take a delight in their knavish exploits and in boasting of them afterward."

With this permission, even though he would have done so if it had not been granted him, Don Quixote went up to the chain of prisoners and asked the first whom he encountered what sins had brought him to so sorry a plight. The man replied that it was for being a lover that he found himself in that line.

"For that and nothing more?" said Don Quixote. "And do they, then, send lovers to the galleys? If so, I should have been rowing there long ago."

"But it was not the kind of love that your Grace has in mind," the prisoner went on. "I loved a wash basket full of white linen so well and hugged it so tightly that, if they had not taken it away from me by force, I would never of my own choice have let go of it to this very minute. I was caught in the act, there was no need to torture me, the case was soon disposed of, and they supplied me with a hundred lashes across the shoulders and, in addition, a three-year stretch in the *gurapas*, and that's all there is to tell."

"What are *gurapas*?" asked Don Quixote.

"*Gurapas* are the galleys," replied the prisoner. He was a lad of around twenty-four and stated that he was a native of Piedrahita.

The knight then put the same question to a second man, who

appeared to be very downcast and melancholy and did not have a word to say. The first man answered for him.

"This one, sir," he said, "is going as a canary—I mean, as a musician and singer."

"How is that?" Don Quixote wanted to know. "Do musicians and singers go to the galleys too?"

"Ycs, sir; and there is nothing worse than singing when you're in trouble."

"On the contrary," said Don Quixote, "I have heard it said that he who sings frightens away his sorrows."

"It is just the opposite," said the prisoner; "for he who sings once weeps all his life long."

"I do not understand," said the knight.

One of the guards then explained. "Sir Knight, with this *non sancta*<sup>41</sup> tribe, to sing when you're in trouble means to confess under torture. This singer was put to the torture and confessed his crime, which was that of being a *cuatrero*, or cattle thief, and as a result of his confession he was condemned to six years in the galleys in addition to two hundred lashes which he took on his shoulders; and so it is he is always downcast and moody, for the other thieves, those back where he came from and the ones here, mistreat, snub, ridicule, and despise him for having confessed and for not having had the courage to deny his guilt. They are in the habit of saying that the word *no* has the same number of letters as the word *sí*,<sup>42</sup> and that a culprit is in luck when his life or death depends on his own tongue and not that of witnesses or upon evidence; and, in my opinion, they are not very far wrong."

"And I," said Don Quixote, "feel the same way about it." He then went on to a third prisoner and repeated his question.

The fellow answered at once, quite unconcernedly. "I'm going to my ladies, the *gurapas*, for five years, for the lack of five ducats."

"I would gladly give twenty," said Don Quixote, "to get you out of this."

"That," said the prisoner, "reminds me of the man in the middle of the ocean who has money and is dying of hunger because there is no place to buy what he needs. I say this for the reason that if I had had, at the right time, those twenty ducats your Grace is now offering me, I'd have greased the notary's quill and freshened up the attorney's wit with them, and I'd now be living in the middle of Zocodover Square in Toledo instead of being here on this highway coupled like a greyhound. But God is great; patience, and that's enough of it."

Don Quixote went on to a fourth prisoner, a venerable-looking old fellow with a white beard that fell over his bosom. When asked

41. unholy.

42. yes.

how he came to be there, this one began weeping and made no reply, but a fifth comrade spoke up in his behalf.

"This worthy man," he said, "is on his way to the galleys after having made the usual rounds clad in a robe of state and on horseback."<sup>43</sup>

"That means, I take it," said Sancho, "that he has been put to shame in public."

"That is it," said the prisoner, "and the offense for which he is being punished is that of having been an ear broker, or, better, a body broker. By that I mean to say, in short, that the gentleman is a pimp, and besides, he has his points as a sorcerer."

"If that point had not been thrown in," said Don Quixote, "he would not deserve, for merely being a pimp, to have to row in the galleys, but rather should be the general and give orders there. For the office of pimp is not an indifferent one; it is a function to be performed by persons of discretion and is most necessary in a well-ordered state; it is a profession that should be followed only by the wellborn, and there should, moreover, be a supervisor or examiner as in the case of other offices, and the number of practitioners should be fixed by law as is done with brokers on the exchange. In that way many evils would be averted that arise when this office is filled and this calling practiced by stupid folk and those with little sense, such as silly women and pages or mountebanks with few years and less experience to their credit, who, on the most pressing occasions, when it is necessary to use one's wits, let the crumbs freeze between their hand and their mouth<sup>44</sup> and do not know which is their right hand and which is the left.

"I would go on and give reasons why it is fitting to choose carefully those who are to fulfill so necessary a state function, but this is not the place for it. One of these days I will speak of the matter to someone who is able to do something about it. I will say here only that the pain I felt at seeing those white hairs and this venerable countenance in such a plight, and all for his having been a pimp, has been offset for me by the additional information you have given me, to the effect that he is a sorcerer as well; for I am convinced that there are no sorcerers in the world who can move and compel the will, as some simple-minded persons think, but that our will is free and no herb or charm can force it.<sup>45</sup> All that certain foolish women and cunning tricksters do is to compound a few mixtures and poisons with which they deprive men of their senses while pretending that they have the power to make them loved,

43. after having been flogged in public, with all the ceremony that accompanied that punishment.

44. are too startled to act.

45. Here Don Quixote despises

charms and love potions though often elsewhere, in his own vision of himself as a knight-errant, he accepts enchantments and spells as part of his world of fantasy.

although, as I have just said, one cannot affect another's will in that manner."

"That is so," said the worthy old man; "but the truth is, sir, I am not guilty on the sorcery charge. As for being a pimp, that is something I cannot deny. I never thought there was any harm in it, however, my only desire being that everyone should enjoy himself and live in peace and quiet, without any quarrels or troubles. But these good intentions on my part cannot prevent me from going where I do not want to go, to a place from which I do not expect to return; for my years are heavy upon me and an affection of the urine that I have will not give me a moment's rest."

With this, he began weeping once more, and Sancho was so touched by it that he took a four-real piece from his bosom and gave it to him as an act of charity.

Don Quixote then went on and asked another what his offense was. The fellow answered him, not with less, but with much more, briskness than the preceding one had shown.

"I am here," he said, "for the reason that I carried a joke too far with a couple of cousins-german of mine and a couple of others who were not mine, and I ended by jesting with all of them to such an extent that the devil himself would never be able to straighten out the relationship. They proved everything on me, there was no one to show me favor, I had no money, I came near swinging for it, they sentenced me to the galleys for six years, and I accepted the sentence as the punishment that was due me. I am young yet, and if I live long enough, everything will come out all right. If, Sir Knight, your Grace has anything with which to aid these poor creatures that you see before you, God will reward you in Heaven, and we here on earth will make it a point to ask God in our prayers to grant you long life and good health, as long and as good as your amiable presence deserves."

This man was dressed as a student, and one of the guards told Don Quixote that he was a great talker and a very fine Latinist.

Back of these came a man around thirty years of age and of very good appearance, except that when he looked at you his eyes were seen to be a little crossed. He was shackled in a different manner from the others, for he dragged behind a chain so huge that it was wrapped all around his body, with two rings at the throat, one of which was attached to the chain while the other was fastened to what is known as a keep-friend or friend's foot, from which two irons hung down to his waist, ending in handcuffs secured by a heavy padlock in such a manner that he could neither raise his hands to his mouth nor lower his head to reach his hands.

When Don Quixote asked why this man was so much more heavily chained than the others, the guard replied that it was be-

cause he had more crimes against him than all the others put together, and he was so bold and cunning that, even though they had him chained like this, they were by no means sure of him but feared that he might escape from them.

"What crimes could he have committed," asked the knight, "if he has merited a punishment no greater than that of-being sent to the galleys?"

"He is being sent there for ten years," replied the guard, "and that is equivalent to civil death. I need tell you no more than that this good man is the famous Ginés de Pasamonte, otherwise known as Ginesillo de Parapilla."

"Señor Commissary," spoke up the prisoner at this point, "go easy there and let us not be so free with names and surnames. My just name is Ginés and not Ginesillo; and Pasamonte, not Parapilla as you make it out to be, is my family name. Let each one mind his own affairs and he will have his hands full."

"Speak a little more respectfully, you big thief, you," said the commissary, "unless you want me to make you be quiet in a way you won't like."

"Man goes as God pleases, that is plain to be seen," replied the galley slave, "but someday someone will know whether my name is Ginesillo de Parapilla or not."

"But, you liar, isn't that what they call you?"

"Yes," said Ginés, "they do call me that; but I'll put a stop to it, or else I'll skin their you-know-what. And you, sir, if you have anything to give us, give it and may God go with you, for I am tired of all this prying into other people's lives. If you want to know anything about my life, know that I am Ginés de Pasamonte whose life story has been written down by these fingers that you see here."

"He speaks the truth," said the commissary, "for he has himself written his story, as big as you please, and has left the book in the prison, having pawned it for two hundred reales."

"And I mean to redeem it," said Ginés, "even if it costs me two hundred ducats."

"Is it as good as that?" inquired Don Quixote.

"It is so good," replied Ginés, "that it will cast into the shade *Lazarillo de Tormes*<sup>46</sup> and all others of that sort that have been or will be written. What I would tell you is that it deals with facts, and facts so interesting and amusing that no lies could equal them."

"And what is the title of the book?" asked Don Quixote.

"*The Life of Ginés de Pasamonte*."

"Is it finished?"

"How could it be finished," said Ginés, "when my life is not

46. a picaresque or rogue novel, published anonymously about the middle of the fifteenth century.

finished as yet? What I have written thus far is an account of what happened to me from the time I was born up to the last time that they sent me to the galleys."

"Then you have been there before?"

"In the service of God and the king I was there four years, and I know what the biscuit and the cowhide are like. I don't mind going very much, for there I will have a chance to finish my book. I still have many things to say, and in the Spanish galleys I shall have all the leisure that I need, though I don't need much, since I know by heart what it is I want to write."

"You seem to be a clever fellow," said Don Quixote.

"And an unfortunate one," said Ginés; "for misfortunes always pursue men of genius."

"They pursue rogues," said the commissary.

"I have told you to go easy, Señor Commissary," said Pasamonte, "for their Lordships did not give you that staff in order that you might mistreat us poor devils with it, but they intended that you should guide and conduct us in accordance with his Majesty's command. Otherwise, by the life of— But enough. It may be that someday the stains made in the inn will come out in the wash. Meanwhile, let everyone hold his tongue, behave well, and speak better, and let us be on our way. We've had enough of this foolishness."

At this point the commissary raised his staff as if to let Pasamonte have it in answer to his threats, but Don Quixote placed himself between them and begged the officer not to abuse the man; for it was not to be wondered at if one who had his hands so bound should be a trifle free with his tongue. With this, he turned and addressed them all.

"From all that you have told me, my dearest brothers," he said, "one thing stands out clearly for me, and that is the fact that, even though it is a punishment for offenses which you have committed, the penalty you are about to pay is not greatly to your liking and you are going to the galleys very much against your own will and desire. It may be that the lack of spirit which one of you displayed under torture, the lack of money on the part of another, the lack of influential friends, or, finally, warped judgment on the part of the magistrate, was the thing that led to your downfall; and, as a result, justice was not done you. All of which presents itself to my mind in such a fashion that I am at this moment engaged in trying to persuade and even force myself to show you what the purpose was for which Heaven sent me into this world, why it was it led me to adopt the calling of knighthood which I profess and take the knightly vow to favor the needy and aid those who are oppressed by the powerful.

"However, knowing as I do that it is not the part of prudence to do by foul means what can be accomplished by fair ones, I propose to ask these gentlemen, your guards, and the commissary to be so good as to unshackle you and permit you to go in peace. There will be no dearth of others to serve his Majesty under more propitious circumstances; and it does not appear to me to be just to make slaves of those whom God created as free men. What is more, gentlemen of the guard, these poor fellows have committed no offense against you. Up there, each of us will have to answer for his own sins; for God in Heaven will not fail to punish the evil and reward the good; and it is not good for self-respecting men to be executioners of their fellow-men in something that does not concern them. And so, I ask this of you, gently and quietly, in order that, if you comply with my request, I shall have reason to thank you; and if you do not do so of your own accord, then this lance and this sword and the valor of my arm shall compel you to do it by force."

"A fine lot of foolishness!" exclaimed the commissary. "So he comes out at last with this nonsense! He would have us let the prisoners of the king go free, as if we had any authority to do so or he any right to command it! Be on your way, sir, at once; straighten that basin that you have on your head, and do not go looking for three feet on a cat."<sup>47</sup>

"You," replied Don Quixote, "are the cat and the rat and the rascal!" And, saying this, he charged the commissary so quickly that the latter had no chance to defend himself but fell to the ground badly wounded by the lance blow. The other guards were astounded by this unexpected occurrence; but, recovering their self-possession, those on horseback drew their swords, those on foot leveled their javelins, and all bore down on Don Quixote, who stood waiting for them very calmly. Things undoubtedly would have gone badly for him if the galley slaves, seeing an opportunity to gain their freedom, had not succeeded in breaking the chain that linked them together. Such was the confusion that the guards, now running to fall upon the prisoners and now attacking Don Quixote, who in turn was attacking them, accomplished nothing that was of any use.

Sancho for his part aided Ginés de Pasamonte to free himself, and that individual was the first to drop his chains and leap out onto the field, where, attacking the fallen commissary, he took away that officer's sword and musket; and as he stood there, aiming first at one and then at another, though without firing, the plain was soon cleared of guards, for they had taken to their heels, fleeing at once Pasamonte's weapon and the stones which the galley slaves,

47. looking for the impossible ("five feet" in the more usual form of the proverb).



freed now, were hurling at them. Sancho, meanwhile, was very much disturbed over this unfortunate event, as he felt sure that the fugitives would report the matter to the Holy Brotherhood,<sup>48</sup> which, to the ringing of the alarm bell, would come out to search for the guilty parties. He said as much to his master, telling him that they should leave at once and go into hiding in the near-by mountains.

"That is all very well," said Don Quixote, "but I know what had best be done now." He then summoned all the prisoners, who, running riot, had by this time despoiled the commissary of everything that he had, down to his skin, and as they gathered around to hear what he had to say, he addressed them as follows:

"It is fitting that those who are wellborn should give thanks for the benefits they have received, and one of the sins with which God is most offended is that of ingratitude. I say this, gentlemen, for the reason that you have seen and had manifest proof of what you owe to me; and now that you are free of the yoke which I have removed from about your necks, it is my will and desire that you should set out and proceed to the city of El Toboso and there present yourselves before the lady Dulcinea del Toboso and say to her that her champion, the Knight of the Mournful Countenance, has sent you; and then you will relate to her, point by point, the whole of this famous adventure which has won you your longed-for freedom. Having done that, you may go where you like, and may good luck go with you."

To this Ginés de Pasamonte replied in behalf of all of them, "It is absolutely impossible, your Grace, our liberator, for us to do what you have commanded. We cannot go down the highway all together but must separate and go singly, each in his own direction, endeavoring to hide ourselves in the bowels of the earth in order not to be found by the Holy Brotherhood, which undoubtedly will come out to search for us. What your Grace can do, and it is right that you should do so, is to change this service and toll that you require of us in connection with the lady Dulcinea del Toboso into a certain number of Credos and Hail Marys which we will say for your Grace's intention, as this is something that can be accomplished by day or night, fleeing or resting, in peace or in war. To imagine, on the other hand, that we are going to return to the fleshpots of Egypt, by which I mean, take up our chains again by setting out along the highway for El Toboso, is to believe that it is night now instead of ten o'clock in the morning and is to ask of us something that is the same as asking pears of the elm tree."

"Then by all that's holy!" exclaimed Don Quixote, whose wrath

48. a tribunal instituted by Ferdinand and Isabella at the end of the fifteenth century to punish highway robberies.

was now aroused, "you, Don Son of a Whore, Don Ginesillo de Parapilla, or whatever your name is, you shall go alone, your tail between your legs and the whole chain on your back."

Pasamonte, who was by no means a long-suffering individual, was by this time convinced that Don Quixote was not quite right in the head, seeing that he had been guilty of such a folly as that of desiring to free them; and so, when he heard himself insulted in this manner, he merely gave the wink to his companions and, going off to one side, began raining so many stones upon the knight that the latter was wholly unable to protect himself with his buckler, while poor Rocinante paid no more attention to the spur than if he had been made of brass. As for Sancho, he took refuge behind his donkey as a protection against the cloud and shower of rocks that was falling on both of them, but Don Quixote was not able to shield himself so well, and there is no telling how many struck his body, with such force as to unhorse and bring him to the ground.

No sooner had he fallen than the student was upon him. Seizing the basin from the knight's head, he struck him three or four blows with it across the shoulders and banged it against the ground an equal number of times until it was fairly shattered to bits. They then stripped Don Quixote of the doublet which he wore over his armor, and would have taken his hose as well, if his greaves had not prevented them from doing so, and made off with Sancho's great-coat, leaving him naked; after which, dividing the rest of the battle spoils amongst themselves, each of them went his own way, being a good deal more concerned with eluding the dreaded Holy Brotherhood than they were with burdening themselves with a chain or going to present themselves before the lady Dulcinea del Toboso.

They were left alone now—the ass and Rocinante, Sancho and Don Quixote: the ass, crestfallen and pensive, wagging its ears now and then, being under the impression that the hurricane of stones that had raged about them was not yet over; Rocinante, stretched alongside his master, for the hack also had been felled by a stone; Sancho, naked and fearful of the Holy Brotherhood; and Don Quixote, making wry faces at seeing himself so mishandled by those to whom he had done so much good.

## Don Quixote, Part II

["Put into a Book"]

### CHAPTER 3

*Of the laughable conversation that took place between Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, and the bachelor Sansón Carrasco.*

Don Quixote remained in a thoughtful mood as he waited for the bachelor Carrasco,<sup>49</sup> from whom he hoped to hear the news as to how he had been put into a book, as Sancho had said. He could not bring himself to believe that any such history existed, since the blood of the enemies he had slain was not yet dry on the blade of his sword; and here they were trying to tell him that his high deeds of chivalry were already circulating in printed form. But, for that matter, he imagined that some sage, either friend or enemy, must have seen to the printing of them through the art of magic. If the chronicler was a friend, he must have undertaken the task in order to magnify and exalt Don Quixote's exploits above the most notable ones achieved by knights-errant of old. If an enemy, his purpose would have been to make them out as nothing at all, by debasing them below the meanest acts ever recorded of any mean squire. The only thing was, the knight reflected, the exploits of squires never were set down in writing. If it was true that such a history existed, being about a knight-errant, then it must be eloquent and lofty in tone, a splendid and distinguished piece of work and veracious in its details.

This consoled him somewhat, although he was a bit put out at the thought that the author was a Moor, if the appellation "Cid" was to be taken as an indication,<sup>50</sup> and from the Moors you could never hope for any word of truth, seeing that they are all of them cheats, forgers, and schemers. He feared lest his love should not have been treated with becoming modesty but rather in a way that would reflect upon the virtue of his lady Dulcinea del Toboso. He hoped that his fidelity had been made clear, and the respect he had always shown her, and that something had been said as to how he had spurned queens, empresses, and damsels of every rank while keeping a rein upon those impulses that are natural to a man. He was still

49. the bachelor of arts Sansón Carrasco, an important new character who appears at the beginning of Part II and will play a considerable rôle in the story with his attempts at "curing" the Don (see our two final selections, "Last Duel" and "Homecoming and Death"). Just now he has been telling Sancho about a book relating the adventures

of Don Quixote and his squire, by which the two have been made famous; the book is, of course, *Don Quixote*, Part I.

50. The allusion is to Cid Hamete Benengeli (see footnote 40 and the corresponding passage in the text); the word *cid*, "chief," is of Arabic derivation.

wrapped up in these and many other similar thoughts when Sancho returned with Carrasco.

Don Quixote received the bachelor very amiably. The latter, although his name was Sansón, or Samson, was not very big so far as bodily size went, but he was a great joker, with a sallow complexion and a ready wit. He was going on twenty-four and had a round face, a snub nose, and a large mouth, all of which showed him to be of a mischievous disposition and fond of jests and witticisms. This became apparent when, as soon as he saw Don Quixote, he fell upon his knees and addressed the knight as follows:

"O mighty Don Quixote de la Mancha, give me your hands; for by the habit of St. Peter that I wear<sup>51</sup>—though I have received but the first four orders—your Grace is one of the most famous knights-errant that ever have been or ever will be anywhere on this earth. Blessings upon Cid Hamete Benengeli who wrote down the history of your great achievements, and upon that curious-minded one who was at pains to have it translated from the Arabic into our Castilian vulgate for the universal entertainment of the people."

Don Quixote bade him rise. "Is it true, then," he asked, "that there is a book about me and that it was some Moorish sage who composed it?"

"By way of showing you how true it is," replied Sansón, "I may tell you that it is my belief that there are in existence today more than twelve thousand copies of that history. If you do not believe me, you have but to make inquiries in Portugal, Barcelona, and Valencia, where editions have been brought out, and there is even a report to the effect that one edition was printed at Antwerp. In short, I feel certain that there will soon not be a nation that does not know it or a language into which it has not been translated."

"One of the things," remarked Don Quixote, "that should give most satisfaction to a virtuous and eminent man is to see his good name spread abroad during his own lifetime, by means of the printing press, through translations into the languages of the various peoples. I have said 'good name,' for if he has any other kind, his fate is worse than death."

"If it is a matter of good name and good reputation," said the bachelor, "your Grace bears off the palm from all the knights-errant in the world; for the Moor in his tongue and the Christian in his have most vividly depicted your Grace's gallantry, your courage in facing dangers, your patience in adversity and suffering, whether the suffering be due to wounds or to misfortunes of another sort, and your virtue and continence in love, in connection with that platonic relationship that exists between your Grace and my lady Doña Dulcinea del Toboso."

51. *the dress of one of the minor clerical orders.*

At this point Sancho spoke up. "Never in my life," he said, "have I heard my lady Dulcinea called 'Doña,' but only 'la Señora Dulcinea del Toboso'; so on that point, already, the history is wrong."

"That is not important," said Carrasco.

"No, certainly not," Don Quixote agreed. "But tell me, Señor Bachelor, what adventures of mine as set down in this book have made the deepest impression?"

"As to that," the bachelor answered, "opinions differ, for it is a matter of individual taste. There are some who are very fond of the adventure of the windmills—those windmills which to your Grace appeared to be so many Briareuses and giants. Others like the episode at the fulling mill. One relishes the story of the two armies which took on the appearance of droves of sheep, while another fancies the tale of the dead man whom they were taking to Segovia for burial. One will assert that the freeing of the galley slaves is the best of all, and yet another will maintain that nothing can come up to the Benedictine giants and the encounter with the valiant Biscayan."

Again Sancho interrupted him. "Tell me, Señor Bachelor," he said, "does the book say anything about the adventure with the Yanguescans, that time our good Rocinante took it into his head to go looking for tidbits in the sea?"

"The sage," replied Sansón, "has left nothing in the inkwell. He has told everything and to the point, even to the capers which the worthy Sancho cut as they tossed him in the blanket."

"I cut no capers in the blanket," objected Sancho, "but I did in the air, and more than I liked."

"I imagine," said Don Quixote, "that there is no history in the world, dealing with humankind, that does not have its ups and downs, and this is particularly true of those that have to do with deeds of chivalry, for they can never be filled with happy incidents alone."

"Nevertheless," the bachelor went on, "there are some who have read the book who say that they would have been glad if the authors had forgotten a few of the innumerable cudgelings which Señor Don Quixote received in the course of his various encounters."

"But that is where the truth of the story comes in," Sancho protested.

"For all of that," observed Don Quixote, "they might well have said nothing about them; for there is no need of recording those events that do not alter the veracity of the chronicle, when they tend only to lessen the reader's respect for the hero. You may be sure that Aeneas was not as pious as Vergil would have us believe, nor was Ulysses as wise as Homer depicts him."

"That is true enough," replied Sansón, "but it is one thing to write as a poet and another as a historian. The former may narrate

or sing of things not as they were but as they should have been; the latter must describe them not as they should have been but as they were, without adding to or detracting from the truth in any degree whatsoever."

"Well," said Sancho, "if this Moorish gentleman is bent upon telling the truth, I have no doubt that among my master's thrashings my own will be found; for they never took the measure of his Grace's shoulders without measuring my whole body. But I don't wonder at that; for as my master himself says, when there's an ache in the head the members have to share it."

"You are a sly fox, Sancho," said Don Quixote. "My word, but you can remember things well enough when you choose to do so!"

"Even if I wanted to forget the whacks they gave me," Sancho answered him, "the welts on my ribs wouldn't let me, for they are still fresh."

"Be quiet, Sancho," his master admonished him, "and do not interrupt the bachelor. I beg him to go on and tell me what is said of me in this book."

"And what it says about me, too," put in Sancho, "for I have heard that I am one of the main presonages in it—"

"*Personages*, not *presonages*, Sancho my friend," said Sansón.

"So we have another one who catches you up on everything you say," was Sancho's retort. "If we go on at this rate, we'll never be through in a lifetime."

"May God put a curse on *my* life," the bachelor told him, "if you are not the second most important person in the story; and there are some who would rather listen to you talk than to anyone else in the book. It is true, there are those who say that you are too gullible in believing it to be the truth that you could become the governor of that island that was offered you by Señor Don Quixote, here present."

"There is still sun on the top of the wall," said Don Quixote, "and when Sancho is a little older, with the experience that the years bring, he will be wiser and better fitted to be a governor than he is at the present time."

"By God, master," said Sancho, "the island that I couldn't govern right now I'd never be able to govern if I lived to be as old as Methuselah. The trouble is, I don't know where that island we are talking about is located; it is not due to any lack of noddle on my part."

"Leave it to God, Sancho," was Don Quixote's advice, "and everything will come out all right, perhaps even better than you think; for not a leaf on the tree stirs except by His will."

"Yes," said Sansón, "if it be God's will, Sancho will not lack a thousand islands to govern, not to speak of one island alone."

"I have seen governors around here," said Sancho, "that are not to be compared to the sole of my shoe, and yet they call them 'your Lordship' and serve them on silver plate."

"Those are not the same kind of governors," Sansón informed him. "Their task is a good deal easier. The ones that govern islands must at least know grammar."

"I could make out well enough with the *gram*," replied Sancho, "but with the *mar* I want nothing to do, for I don't understand it at all. But leaving this business of the governorship in God's hands—for He will send me wherever I can best serve Him—I will tell you, Señor Bachelor Sansón Carrasco, that I am very much pleased that the author of the history should have spoken of me in such a way as does not offend me; for, upon the word of a faithful squire, if he had said anything about me that was not becoming to an old Christian, the deaf would have heard of it."

"That would be to work miracles," said Sansón.

"Miracles or no miracles," was the answer, "let everyone take care as to what he says or writes about people and not be setting down the first thing that pops into his head."

"One of the faults that is found with the book," continued the bachelor, "is that the author has inserted in it a story entitled *The One Who Was Too Curious for His Own Good*. It is not that the story in itself is a bad one or badly written; it is simply that it is out of place there, having nothing to do with the story of his Grace, Señor Don Quixote."<sup>52</sup>

"I will bet you," said Sancho, "that the son of a dog has mixed the cabbages with the baskets."<sup>53</sup>

"And I will say right now," declared Don Quixote, "that the author of this book was not a sage but some ignorant prattler who at haphazard and without any method set about the writing of it, being content to let things turn out as they might. In the same manner, Orbancja,<sup>54</sup> the painter of Ubeda, when asked what he was painting would reply, 'Whatever it turns out to be.' Sometimes it would be a cock, in which case he would have to write alongside it, in Gothic letters, 'This is a cock.' And so it must be with my story, which will need a commentary to make it understandable."

"No," replied Sansón, "that it will not; for it is so clearly written that none can fail to understand it. Little children leaf through it, young people read it, adults appreciate it, and the aged sing its praises. In short, it is so thumbled and read and so well known to persons of every walk in life that no sooner do folks see some skinny

52. The story, a tragic tale about a jealousy-ridden husband, occupies several chapters of Part I. Here, as elsewhere in this chapter, Cervantes echoes criticism currently aimed at his book.

53. has jumbled together things of different kinds.

54. This painter is known only through the present allusion in *Don Quixote*.

nag than they at once cry, 'There goes Rocinante!' Those that like it best of all are the pages; for there is no lord's antechamber where a *Don Quixote* is not to be found. If one lays it down, another will pick it up; one will pounce upon it, and another will beg for it. It affords the pleasantest and least harmful reading of any book that has been published up to now. In the whole of it there is not to be found an indecent word or a thought that is other than Catholic."

"To write in any other manner," observed Don Quixote, "would be to write lies and not the truth. Those historians who make use of falsehoods ought to be burned like the makers of counterfeit money. I do not know what could have led the author to introduce stories and episodes that are foreign to the subject matter when he had so much to write about in describing my adventures. He must undoubtedly, have been inspired by the old saying, 'With straw or with hay . . .'<sup>55</sup> For, in truth, all he had to do was to record my thoughts, my sighs, my tears, my lofty purposes, and my undertakings, and he would have had a volume bigger or at least as big as that which the works of El Tostado<sup>56</sup> would make. To sum the matter up, Señor Bachelor, it is my opinion that, in composing histories or books of any sort, a great deal of judgment and ripe understanding is called for. To say and write witty and amusing things is the mark of great genius. The cleverest character in a comedy is the clown, since he who would make himself out to be a simpleton cannot be one. History is a near-sacred thing, for it must be true, and where the truth is, there is God. And yet there are those who compose books and toss them out into the world as if they were no more than fritters."

"There is no book so bad," opined the bachelor, "that there is not some good in it."

"Doubtless that is so," replied Don Quixote, "but it very often happens that those who have won in advance a great and well-deserved reputation for their writings, lose it in whole or in part when they give their works to the printer."

"The reason for it," said Sansón, "is that, printed works being read at leisure, their faults are the more readily apparent, and the greater the reputation of the author the more closely are they scrutinized. Men famous for their genius, great poets, illustrious historians, are almost always envied by those who take a special delight in criticizing the writings of others without having produced anything of their own."

"That is not to be wondered at," said Don Quixote, "for there are many theologians who are not good enough for the pulpit but

55. The proverb concludes either "the mattress is filled" or "I fill my belly."

56. Alonso de Madrigal, bishop of Avila, a prolific author of devotional works.



who are very good indeed when it comes to detecting the faults or excesses of those who preach."

"All of this is very true, Señor Don Quixote," replied Carrasco, "but, all the same, I could wish that these self-appointed censors were a bit more forbearing and less hypercritical; I wish they would pay a little less attention to the spots on the bright sun of the work that occasions their fault-finding. For if *aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus*,<sup>57</sup> let them consider how much of his time he spent awake, shedding the light of his genius with a minimum of shade. It well may be that what to them seems a flaw is but one of those moles which sometimes add to the beauty of a face. In any event, I insist that he who has a book printed runs a very great risk, inasmuch as it is an utter impossibility to write it in such a manner that it will please all who read it."

"This book about me must have pleased very few," remarked Don Quixote.

"Quite the contrary," said Sansón, "for just as *stultorum infinitus est numerus*,<sup>58</sup> so the number of those who have enjoyed this history is likewise infinite. Some, to be sure, have complained of the author's forgetfulness, seeing that he neglected to make it plain who the thief was who stole Sancho's gray;<sup>59</sup> for it is not stated there, but merely implied, that the ass was stolen; and, a little further on, we find the knight mounted on the same beast, although it has not made its reappearance in the story. They also say that the author forgot to tell us what Sancho did with those hundred crowns that he found in the valise on the Sierra Morena, as nothing more is said of them and there are many who would like to know how he disposed of the money or how he spent it. This is one of the serious omissions to be found in the work."

To this Sancho replied, "I, Señor Sansón, do not feel like giving any account or accounting just now; for I feel a little weak in my stomach, and if I don't do something about it by taking a few swigs of the old stuff, I'll be sitting on St. Lucy's thorn.<sup>60</sup> I have some of it at home, and my old woman is waiting for me. After I've had my dinner, I'll come back and answer any questions your Grace or anybody else wants to ask me, whether it's about the loss of the ass or the spending of the hundred crowns."

And without waiting for a reply or saying another word, he went on home. Don Quixote urged the bachelor to stay and take potluck with him, and Sansón accepted the invitation and remained. In addition to the knight's ordinary fare, they had a couple of pigeons, and at table their talk was of chivalry and feats of arms.

57. "Good Homer sometimes nods too." (Horace, *Art of Poetry*, l. 359.)

58. "Infinite is the number of fools."

(Ecclesiasticus 1:15.)

59. in Part I, Chapter 23.

60. I shall be weak and exhausted.

[“For I Well Know the Meaning of Valor”]

## CHAPTER 17

*Wherein Don Quixote's unimaginable courage reaches its highest point, together with the adventure of the lions and its happy ending.*

The history relates that, when Don Quixote called to Sancho to bring him his helmet,<sup>61</sup> the squire was busy buying some curds from the shepherds and, flustered by his master's great haste, did not know what to do with them or how to carry them. Having already paid for the curds, he did not care to lose them, and so he decided to put them into the headpiece, and, acting upon this happy inspiration, he returned to see what was wanted of him.

“Give me that helmet,” said the knight; “for either I know little about adventures or here is one where I am going to need my armor.”

Upon hearing this, the gentleman in the green-colored greatcoat<sup>62</sup> looked around in all directions but could see nothing except the cart that was approaching them, decked out with two or three flags which indicated that the vehicle in question must be conveying his Majesty's property. He remarked as much to Don Quixote, but the latter paid no attention, for he was always convinced that whatever happened to him meant adventures and more adventures.

“Forewarned is forearmed,” he said. “I lose nothing by being prepared, knowing as I do that I have enemies both visible and invisible and cannot tell when or where or in what form they will attack me.”

Turning to Sancho, he asked for his helmet again, and as there was no time to shake out the curds, the squire had to hand it to him as it was. Don Quixote took it and, without noticing what was in it, hastily clapped it on his head; and forthwith, as a result of the pressure on the curds, the whey began running down all over his face and beard, at which he was very much startled.

“What is this, Sancho?” he cried. “I think my head must be softening or my brains melting, or else I am sweating from head to foot. If sweat it be, I assure you it is not from fear, though I can well believe that the adventure which now awaits me is a terrible one indeed. Give me something with which to wipe my face, if you have anything, for this perspiration is so abundant that it blinds me.”

Sancho said nothing but gave him a cloth and at the same time

61. Don Quixote has been deep in talk with “a prudent gentleman of La Mancha” met on the road, Don Diego de Miranda. Sancho has left the two for a moment to go and buy milk from

some shepherds.

62. Don Diego de Miranda, whom Don Quixote later dubs the Knight of the Green-colored Greatcoat.

gave thanks to God that his master had not discovered what the trouble was. Don Quixote wiped his face and then took off his helmet to see what it was that made his head feel so cool. Catching sight of that watery white mass, he lifted it to his nose and smelled it.

"By the life of my lady Dulcinea del Toboso!" he exclaimed. "Those are curds that you have put there, you treacherous, brazen, ill-mannered squire!"

To this Sancho replied, very calmly and with a straight face, "If they are curds, give them to me, your Grace, so that I can eat them. But no, let the devil eat them, for he must be the one who did it. Do you think I would be so bold as to soil your Grace's helmet? Upon my word, master, by the understanding that God has given me, I, too, must have enchanters who are persecuting me as your Grace's creature and one of his members, and they are the ones who put that filthy mess there to make you lose your patience and your temper and cause you to whack my ribs as you are in the habit of doing. Well, this time, I must say, they have missed the mark; for I trust my master's good sense to tell him that I have neither curds nor milk nor anything of the kind, and if I did have, I'd put it in my stomach and not in that helmet."

"That may very well be," said Don Quixote.

Don Diego was observing all this and was more astonished than ever, especially when, after he had wiped his head, face, beard, and helmet, Don Quixote once more donned the piece of armor and, settling himself in the stirrups, proceeded to adjust his sword and fix his lance.

"Come what may, here I stand, ready to take on Satan himself in person!" shouted the knight.

The cart with the flags had come up to them by this time, accompanied only by a driver riding one of the mules and a man seated up in front.

"Where are you going, brothers?" Don Quixote called out as he placed himself in the path of the cart. "What conveyance is this, what do you carry in it, and what is the meaning of those flags?"

"The cart is mine," replied the driver, "and in it are two fierce lions in cages which the governor of Oran is sending to court as a present for his Majesty. The flags are those of our lord the King, as a sign that his property goes here."

"And are the lions large?" inquired Don Quixote.

It was the man sitting at the door of the cage who answered him. "The largest," he said, "that ever were sent from Africa to Spain. I am the lionkeeper and I have brought back others, but never any like these. They are male and female. The male is in this first cage, the female in the one behind. They are hungry right now, for they

have had nothing to eat today; and so we'd be obliged if your Grace would get out of the way, for we must hasten on to the place where we are to feed them."

"Lion whelps against me?" said Don Quixote with a slight smile. "Lion whelps against me? And at such an hour? Then, by God, those gentlemen who sent them shall see whether I am the man to be frightened by lions. Get down, my good fellow, and since you are the lionkeeper, open the cages and turn those beasts out for me; and in the middle of this plain I will teach them who Don Quixote de la Mancha is, notwithstanding and in spite of the enchanters who are responsible for their being here."

"So," said the gentleman to himself as he heard this, "our worthy knight has revealed himself. It must indeed be true that the curds have softened his skull and mellowed his brains."

At this point Sancho approached him. "For God's sake, sir," he said, "do something to keep my master from fighting those lions. For if he does, they're going to tear us all to bits."

"Is your master, then, so insane," the gentleman asked, "that you fear and believe he means to tackle those fierce animals?"

"It is not that he is insane," replied Sancho, "but, rather, foolhardy."

"Very well," said the gentleman, "I will put a stop to it." And going up to Don Quixote, who was still urging the lionkeeper to open the cages, he said, "Sir Knight, knights-errant should undertake only those adventures that afford some hope of a successful outcome, not those that are utterly hopeless to begin with; for valor when it turns to temerity has in it more of madness than of bravery. Moreover, these lions have no thought of attacking your Grace but are a present to his Majesty, and it would not be well to detain them or interfere with their journey."

"My dear sir," answered Don Quixote, "you had best go mind your tame partridge and that bold ferret of yours and let each one attend to his own business. This is my affair, and I know whether these gentlemen, the lions, have come to attack me or not." He then turned to the lionkeeper. "I swear, Sir Rascal, if you do not open those cages at once, I'll pin you to the cart with this lance!"

Perceiving how determined the armed phantom was, the driver now spoke up. "Good sir," he said, "will your Grace please be so kind as to let me unhitch the mules and take them to a safe place before you turn those lions loose? For if they kill them for me, I am ruined for life, since the mules and cart are all the property I own."

"O man of little faith!" said Don Quixote. "Get down and unhitch your mules if you like, but you will soon see that it was quite unnecessary and that you might have spared yourself the trouble."

The driver did so, in great haste, as the lionkeeper began shout-

ing, "I want you all to witness that I am being compelled against my will to open the cages and turn the lions out, and I further warn this gentleman that he will be responsible for all the harm and damage the beasts may do, plus my wages and my fees. You other gentlemen take cover before I open the doors; I am sure they will not do any harm to me."

Once more Don Diego sought to persuade his companion not to commit such an act of madness, as it was tempting God to undertake anything so foolish as that; but Don Quixote's only answer was that he knew what he was doing. And when the gentleman in green insisted that he was sure the knight was laboring under a delusion and ought to consider the matter well, the latter cut him short.

"Well, then, sir," he said, "if your Grace does not care to be a spectator at what you believe is going to turn out to be a tragedy, all you have to do is to spur your flea-bitten mare and seek safety."

Hearing this, Sancho with tears in his eyes again begged him to give up the undertaking, in comparison with which the adventure of the windmills and the dreadful one at the fulling mills—indeed, all the exploits his master had ever in the course of his life undertaken—were but bread and cakes.

"Look, sir," Sancho went on, "there is no enchantment here nor anything of the sort. Through the bars and chinks of that cage I have seen a real lion's claw, and judging by the size of it, the lion that it belongs to is bigger than a mountain."

"Fear, at any rate," said Don Quixote, "will make him look bigger to you than half the world. Retire, Sancho, and leave me, and if I die here, you know our ancient pact: you are to repair to Dulcinea—I say no more."

To this he added other remarks that took away any hope they had that he might not go through with his insane plan. The gentleman in the green-colored greatcoat was of a mind to resist him but saw that he was no match for the knight in the matter of arms. Then, too, it did not seem to him the part of wisdom to fight it out with a madman; for Don Quixote now impressed him as being quite mad in every way. Accordingly, while the knight was repeating his threats to the lionkeeper, Don Diego spurred his mare, Sancho his gray, and the driver his mules, all of them seeking to put as great a distance as possible between themselves and the cart before the lions broke loose.

Sancho already was bewailing his master's death, which he was convinced was bound to come from the lions' claws, and at the same time he cursed his fate and called it an unlucky hour in which he had taken it into his head to serve such a one. But despite his tears and lamentations, he did not leave off thrashing his gray in an effort to leave the cart behind them. When the lionkeeper saw

that those who had fled were a good distance away, he once more entreated and warned Don Quixote as he had warned and entreated him before, but the answer he received was that he might save his breath as it would do him no good and he had best hurry and obey. In the space of time that it took the keeper to open the first cage, Don Quixote considered the question as to whether it would be well to give battle on foot or on horseback. He finally decided that he would do better on foot, as he feared that Rocinante would become frightened at sight of the lions; and so, leaping down from his horse, he fixed his lance, braced his buckler, and drew his sword, and then advanced with marvelous daring and great resoluteness until he stood directly in front of the cart, meanwhile commending himself to God with all his heart and then to his lady Dulcinea.

Upon reaching this point, the reader should know, the author of our voracious history indulges in the following exclamatory passage:

"O great-souled Don Quixote de la Mancha, thou whose courage is beyond all praise, mirror wherein all the valiant of the world may behold themselves, a new and second Don Manuel de León,<sup>63</sup> once the glory and the honor of Spanish knighthood! With what words shall I relate thy terrifying exploit, how render it credible to the ages that are to come? What eulogies do not belong to thee of right, even though they consist of hyperbole piled upon hyperbole? On foot and singlehanded, intrepid and with greathearted valor, armed but with a sword, and not one of the keen-edged Little Dog<sup>64</sup> make, and with a shield that was not of gleaming and polished steel, thou didst stand and wait for the two fiercest lions that ever the African forests bred! Thy deeds shall be thy praise, O valorous Manchegan; I leave them to speak for thee, since words fail me with which to extol them."

Here the author leaves off his exclamations and resumes the thread of the story.

Seeing Don Quixote posed there before him and perceiving that, unless he wished to incur the bold knight's indignation there was nothing for him to do but release the male lion, the keeper now opened the first cage, and it could be seen at once how extraordinarily big and horribly ugly the beast was. The first thing the recumbent animal did was to turn round, put out a claw, and stretch himself all over. Then he opened his mouth and yawned very slowly, after which he put out a tongue that was nearly two palms in length and with it licked the dust out of his eyes and washed his face. Having done this, he stuck his head outside the cage and gazed about him in all directions. His eyes were now like

63. Don Manuel Ponce de León, a paragon of gallantry and courtesy, belonging to the time of Ferdinand and

Isabella.

64. the trademark of a famous armorer of Toledo and Saragossa.

live coals and his appearance and demeanor were such as to strike terror in temerity itself. But Don Quixote merely stared at him attentively, waiting for him to descend from the cart so that they could come to grips, for the knight was determined to hack the brute to pieces, such was the extent of his unheard-of madness.

The lion, however, proved to be courteous rather than arrogant and was in no mood for childish bravado. After having gazed first in one direction and then in another, as has been said, he turned his back and presented his hind parts to Don Quixote and then very calmly and peaceably lay down and stretched himself out once more in his cage. At this, Don Quixote ordered the keeper to stir him up with a stick in order to irritate him and drive him out.

"That I will not do," the keeper replied, "for if I stir him, I will be the first one he will tear to bits. Be satisfied with what you have already accomplished, Sir Knight, which leaves nothing more to be said on the score of valor, and do not go tempting your fortune a second time. The door was open and the lion could have gone out if he had chosen; since he has not done so up to now, that means he will stay where he is all day long. Your Grace's stouthcartedness has been well established; for no brave fighter, as I see it, is obliged to do more than challenge his enemy and wait for him in the field; his adversary, if he does not come, is the one who is disgraced and the one who awaits him gains the crown of victory."

"That is the truth," said Don Quixote. "Shut the door, my friend, and bear me witness as best you can with regard to what you have seen me do here. I would have you certify: that you opened the door for the lion, that I waited for him and he did not come out, that I continued to wait and still he stayed there, and finally went back and lay down. I am under no further obligation. Away with enchantments, and God uphold the right, the truth, and true chivalry! So close the door, as I have told you, while I signal to the fugitives in order that they who were not present may hear of this exploit from your lips."

The keeper did as he was commanded, and Don Quixote, taking the cloth with which he had dried his face after the rain of curds, fastened it to the point of his lance and began summoning the runaways, who, all in a body with the gentleman in green bringing up the rear, were still fleeing and turning around to look back at every step. Sancho was the first to see the white cloth.

"May they slay me," he said, "if my master hasn't conquered those fierce beasts, for he's calling to us."

They all stopped and made sure that the one who was doing the signaling was indeed Don Quixote, and then, losing some of their fear, they little by little made their way back to a point where they

could distinctly hear what the knight was saying. At last they returned to the cart, and as they drew near Don Quixote spoke to the driver.

"You may come back, brother, hitch your mules, and continue your journey. And you, Sancho, may give each of them two gold crowns to recompense them for the delay they have suffered on my account."

"That I will, right enough," said Sancho. "But what has become of the lions? Are they dead or alive?"

The keeper thereupon, in leisurely fashion and in full detail, proceeded to tell them how the encounter had ended, taking pains to stress to the best of his ability the valor displayed by Don Quixote, at sight of whom the lion had been so cowed that he was unwilling to leave his cage, though the door had been left open quite a while. The fellow went on to state that the knight had wanted him to stir the lion up and force him out, but had finally been convinced that this would be tempting God and so, much to his displeasure and against his will, had permitted the door to be closed.

"What do you think of that, Sancho?" asked Don Quixote. "Are there any spells that can withstand true gallantry? The enchanters may take my luck away, but to deprive me of my strength and courage is an impossibility."

Sancho then bestowed the crowns, the driver hitched his mules, and the lionkeeper kissed Don Quixote's hands for the favor received, promising that, when he reached the court, he would relate this brave exploit to the king himself.

"In that case," replied Don Quixote, "if his Majesty by any chance should inquire who it was that performed it, you are to say that it was the Knight of the Lions; for that is the name by which I wish to be known from now on, thus changing, exchanging, altering, and converting the one I have previously borne, that of Knight of the Mournful Countenance; in which respect I am but following the old custom of knights-errant, who changed their names whenever they liked or found it convenient to do so."

With this, the cart continued on its way, and Don Quixote, Sancho, and the gentleman in the green-colored greatcoat likewise resumed their journey. During all this time Don Diego de Miranda had not uttered a word but was wholly taken up with observing what Don Quixote did and listening to what he had to say. The knight impressed him as being a crazy sane man and an insane one on the verge of sanity. The gentleman did not happen to be familiar with the first part of our history, but if he had read it he would have ceased to wonder at such talk and conduct, for he would then have known what kind of madness this was. Remaining as he did in ignorance of his companion's malady, he took him now for a



sensible individual and now for a madman, since what Don Quixote said was coherent, elegantly phrased, and to the point, whereas his actions were nonsensical, foolhardy, and downright silly. What greater madness could there be, Don Diego asked himself, than to don a helmet filled with curds and then persuade oneself that enchanters were softening one's cranium? What could be more rashly absurd than to wish to fight lions by sheer strength alone? He was roused from these thoughts, this inward soliloquy, by the sound of Don Quixote's voice.

"Undoubtedly, Señor Don Diego de Miranda, your Grace must take me for a fool and a madman, am I not right? And it would be small wonder if such were the case, seeing that my deeds give evidence of nothing else. But, nevertheless, I would advise your Grace that I am neither so mad nor so lacking in wit as I must appear to you to be. A gaily caparisoned knight giving a fortunate lance thrust to a fierce bull in the middle of a great square makes a pleasing appearance in the eyes of his king. The same is true of a knight clad in shining armor as he paces the lists in front of the ladies in some joyous tournament. It is true of all those knights who, by means of military exercises or what appear to be such, divert and entertain and, if one may say so, honor the courts of princes. But the best showing of all is made by a knight-errant who, traversing deserts and solitudes, crossroads, forests, and mountains, goes seeking dangerous adventures with the intention of bringing them to a happy and successful conclusion, and solely for the purpose of winning a glorious and enduring renown. !

"More impressive, I repeat, is the knight-errant succoring a widow in some unpopulated place than a courtly man of arms making love to a damsel in the city. All knights have their special callings: let the courtier wait upon the ladies and lend luster by his liveries to his sovereign's palace; let him nourish impoverished gentlemen with the splendid fare of his table; let him give tourneys and show himself truly great, generous, and magnificent and a good Christian above all, thus fulfilling his particular obligations. But the knight-errant's case is different.

"Let the latter seek out the nooks and corners of the world; let him enter into the most intricate of labyrinths; let him attempt the impossible at every step; let him endure on desolate highlands the burning rays of the midsummer sun and in winter the harsh inclemencies of wind and frost; let no lions inspire him with fear, no monsters frighten him, no dragons terrify him, for to seek them out, attack them, and conquer them all is his chief and legitimate occupation. Accordingly, I whose lot it is to be numbered among the knights-errant cannot fail to attempt anything that appears to me to fall within the scope of my duties, just as I attacked those

lions a while ago even though I knew it to be an exceedingly rash thing to do, for that was a matter that directly concerned me.

"For I well know the meaning of valor: namely, a virtue that lies between the two extremes of cowardice on the one hand and temerity on the other. It is, nonetheless, better for the brave man to carry his bravery to the point of rashness than for him to sink into cowardice. Even as it is easier for the prodigal to become a generous man than it is for the miser, so is it easier for the foolhardy to become truly brave than it is for the coward to attain valor. And in this matter of adventures, you may believe me, Señor Don Diego, it is better to lose by a card too many than a card too few, and 'Such and such a knight is temerarious and overbold' sounds better to the ear than 'That knight is timid and a coward.'"

"I must assure you, Señor Don Quixote," replied Don Diego, "that everything your Grace has said and done will stand the test of reason; and it is my opinion that if the laws and ordinances of knight-errantry were to be lost, they would be found again in your Grace's bosom, which is their depository and storehouse. But it is growing late; let us hasten to my village and my home, where your Grace shall rest from your recent exertions; for if the body is not tired the spirit may be, and that sometimes results in bodily fatigue."

"I accept your offer as a great favor and an honor, Señor Don Diego," was the knight's reply. And, by spurring their mounts more than they had up to then, they arrived at the village around two in the afternoon and came to the house that was occupied by Don Diego, whom Don Quixote had dubbed the Knight of the Green-colored Greatcoat.

### [Last Duel]

#### CHAPTER 64

*Which treats of the adventure that caused Don Quixote the most sorrow of all those that have thus far befallen him.*

. . . One morning, as Don Quixote went for a ride along the beach,<sup>65</sup> clad in full armor—for, as he was fond of saying, that was his only ornament, his only rest the fight, and, accordingly, he was never without it for a moment—he saw approaching him a horseman similarly arrayed from head to foot and with a brightly shining moon blazoned upon his shield.

As soon as he had come within earshot the stranger cried out to

<sup>65</sup> Don Quixote and Sancho after numberless encounters and experiences (of which the most prominent have been the Don's descent into the cave of Montesinos, and the residence at the castle of the playful ducal couple who give Sancho the "governorship of an

island" for ten days), are now in Barcelona. Famous as they are, they meet the viceroy and the nobles; their host is Don Antonio Moreno, "a gentleman of wealth and discernment who was fond of amusing himself in an innocent and kindly way."

Don Quixote in a loud voice, "O illustrious knight, the never to be sufficiently praised Don Quixote de la Mancha, I am the Knight of the White Moon whose incomparable exploits you will perhaps recall. I come to contend with you and try the might of my arm, with the purpose of having you acknowledge and confess that my lady, whoever she may be, is beyond comparison more beautiful than your own Dulcinea del Toboso. If you will admit the truth of this fully and freely, you will escape death and I shall be spared the trouble of inflicting it upon you. On the other hand, if you choose to fight and I should overcome you, I ask no other satisfaction than that, laying down your arms and seeking no further adventures, you retire to your own village for the space of a year, during which time you are not to lay hand to sword but are to dwell peacefully and tranquilly, enjoying a beneficial rest that shall redound to the betterment of your worldly fortunes and the salvation of your soul. But if you are the victor, then my head shall be at your disposal, my arms and steed shall be the spoils, and the fame of my exploits shall go to increase your own renown. Consider well which is the better course and let me have your answer at once, for today is all the time I have for the dispatching of this business."

Don Quixote was amazed at the knight's arrogance as well as at the nature of the challenge, but it was with a calm and stern demeanor that he replied to him.

"Knight of the White Moon," he said, "of whose exploits up to now I have never heard, I will venture to take an oath that you have not once laid eyes upon the illustrious Dulcinea; for I am quite certain that if you had beheld her you would not be staking your all upon such an issue, since the sight of her would have convinced you that there never has been, and never can be, any beauty to compare with hers. I do not say that you lie, I simply say that you are mistaken; and so I accept your challenge with the conditions you have laid down, and at once, before this day you have fixed upon shall have ended. The only exception I make is with regard to the fame of your deeds being added to my renown, since I do not know what the character of your exploits has been and am quite content with my own, such as they are. Take, then, whichever side of the field you like, and I will take up my position, and may St. Peter bless what God may give."

Now, as it happened, the Knight of the White Moon was seen by some of the townspeople, who informed the viceroy that he was there, talking to Don Quixote de la Mancha. Believing this to be a new adventure arranged by Don Antonio Moreno or some other gentleman of the place, the viceroy at once hastened down to the beach, accompanied by a large retinue, including Don Antonio, and they arrived just as Don Quixote was wheeling Rocinante to

measure off the necessary stretch of field. When the viceroy perceived that they were about to engage in combat, he at once interposed and inquired of them what it was that impelled them thus to do battle all of a sudden.

The Knight of the White Moon replied that it was a matter of beauty and precedence and briefly repeated what he had said to Don Quixote, explaining the terms to which both parties had agreed. The viceroy then went up to Don Antonio and asked him if he knew any such knight as this or if it was some joke that they were playing, but the answer that he received left him more puzzled than ever; for Don Antonio did not know who the knight was, nor could he say as to whether this was a real encounter or not. The viceroy, accordingly, was doubtful about letting them proceed, but inasmuch as he could not bring himself to believe that it was anything more than a jest, he withdrew to one side, saying, "Sir Knights, if there is nothing for it but to confess<sup>66</sup> or die, and if Señor Don Quixote's mind is made up and your Grace, the Knight of the White Moon, is even more firmly resolved, then fall to it in the name of God and may He bestow the victory."

The Knight of the White Moon thanked the viceroy most courteously and in well-chosen words for the permission which had been granted them, and Don Quixote did the same, whereupon the latter, commending himself with all his heart to Heaven and to his lady Dulcinea, as was his custom at the beginning of a fray, fell back a little farther down the field as he saw his adversary doing the same. And then, without blare of trumpet or other warlike instrument to give them the signal for the attack, both at the same instant wheeled their steeds about and returned for the charge. Being mounted upon the swifter horse, the Knight of the White Moon met Don Quixote two-thirds of the way and with such tremendous force that, without touching his opponent with his lance (which, it seemed, he deliberately held aloft) he brought both Rocinante and his rider to the ground in an exceedingly perilous fall. At once the victor leaped down and placed his lance at Don Quixote's visor.

"You are vanquished, O knight! Nay, more, you are dead unless you make confession in accordance with the conditions governing our encounter."

Stunned and battered, Don Quixote did not so much as raise his visor but in a faint, wan voice, as if speaking from the grave, he said, "Dulcinea del Toboso is the most beautiful woman in the world and I the most unhappy knight upon the face of this earth. It is not right that my weakness should serve to defraud the truth. Drive

66. admit one's error.

home your lance, O knight, and take my life since you already have deprived me of my honor."

"That I most certainly shall not do," said the one of the White Moon. "Let the fame of my lady Dulcinea del Toboso's beauty live on undiminished. As for me, I shall be content if the great Don Quixote will retire to his village for a year or until such a time as I may specify, as was agreed upon between us before joining battle."

The viceroy, Don Antonio, and all the many others who were present heard this, and they also heard Don Quixote's response, which was to the effect that, seeing nothing was asked of him that was prejudicial to Dulcinea, he would fulfill all the other conditions like a true and punctilious knight. The one of the White Moon thereupon turned and with a bow to the viceroy rode back to the city at a mild canter. The viceroy promptly dispatched Don Antonio to follow him and make every effort to find out who he was; and, in the meanwhile, they lifted Don Quixote up and uncovered his face, which held no sign of color and was bathed in perspiration. Rocinante, however, was in so sorry a state that he was unable to stir for the present.

Brokenhearted over the turn that events had taken, Sancho did not know what to say or do. It seemed to him that all this was something that was happening in a dream and that everything was the result of magic. He saw his master surrender, heard him consent not to take up arms again for a year to come as the light of his glorious exploits faded into darkness. At the same time his own hopes, based upon the fresh promises that had been made him, were whirled away like smoke before the wind. He feared that Rocinante was maimed for life, his master's bones permanently dislocated—it would have been a bit of luck if his madness also had been jolted out of him.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, in a hand litter which the viceroy had them bring, they bore the knight back to town. The viceroy himself then returned, for he was very anxious to ascertain who the Knight of the White Moon was who had left Don Quixote in so lamentable a condition.

## CHAPTER 65

*Wherein is revealed who the Knight of the White Moon was.*

The Knight of the White Moon was followed not only by Don Antonio Moreno, but by a throng of small boys as well, who kept after him until the doors of one of the city's hostelries had closed behind him. A squire came out to meet him and remove his armor,

67. The original has an untranslatable pun on *deslocado*, which means "out of joint" ("dislocated") and also "cured of madness" (from *loco*, "mad").

for which purpose the victor proceeded to shut himself up in a lower room, in the company of Don Antonio, who had also entered the inn and whose bread would not bake until he had learned the knight's identity. Perceiving that the gentleman had no intention of leaving him, he of the White Moon then spoke.

"Sir," he said, "I am well aware that you have come to find out who I am; and, seeing that there is no denying you the information that you seek, while my servant here is removing my armor I will tell you the exact truth of the matter. I would have you know, sir, that I am the bachelor Sansón Carrasco from the same village as Don Quixote de la Mancha, whose madness and absurdities inspire pity in all of us who know him and in none more than me. And so, being convinced that his salvation lay in his returning home for a period of rest in his own house, I formed a plan for bringing him back.

"It was three months ago that I took to the road as a knight-errant, calling myself the Knight of the Mirrors, with the object of fighting and overcoming him without doing him any harm, intending first to lay down the condition that the vanquished was to yield to the victor's will. What I meant to ask of him—for I looked upon him as conquered from the start—was that he should return to his village and not leave it for a whole year, in the course of which time he might be cured. Fate, however, ordained things otherwise; for he was the one who conquered me and overthrew me from my horse, and thus my plan came to naught. He continued on his wanderings, and I went home, defeated, humiliated, and bruised from my fall, which was quite a dangerous one. But I did not for this reason give up the idea of hunting him up once more and vanquishing him as you have seen me do today.

"Since he is the soul of honor when it comes to observing the ordinances of knight-errantry, there is not the slightest doubt that he will keep the promise he has given me and fulfill his obligations. And that, sir, is all that I need to tell you concerning what has happened. I beg you not to disclose my secret or reveal my identity to Don Quixote, in order that my well-intentioned scheme may be carried out and a man of excellent judgment be brought back to his senses—for a sensible man he would be, once rid of the follies of chivalry."

"My dear sir," exclaimed Don Antonio, "may God forgive you for the wrong you have done the world by seeking to deprive it of its most charming madman! Do you not see that the benefit accomplished by restoring Don Quixote to his senses can never equal the pleasure which others derive from his vagaries? But it is my opinion that all the trouble to which the Señor Bachelor has put himself will not suffice to cure a man who is so hopelessly insane; and if it

were not uncharitable, I would say let Don Quixote never be cured, since with his return to health we lose not only his own drolleries but also those of his squire, Sancho Panza, for either of the two is capable of turning melancholy itself into joy and merriment. Nevertheless, I will keep silent and tell him nothing, that I may see whether or not I am right in my suspicion that Señor Carrasco's efforts will prove to have been of no avail."

The bachelor replied that, all in all, things looked very favorable and he hoped for a fortunate outcome. With this, he took his leave of Don Antonio, after offering to render him any service that he could; and, having had his armor tied up and placed upon a mulc's back, he rode out of the city that same day on the same horse on which he had gone into battle, returning to his native province without anything happening to him that is worthy of being set down in this veracious chronicle.

[Homecoming and Death]

CHAPTER 73

*Of the omens that Don Quixote encountered upon entering his village, with other incidents that embellish and lend credence to this great history.*

As they entered the village, Cid Hamete informs us, Don Quixote caught sight of two lads on the communal threshing floor who were engaged in a dispute.

"Don't let it worry you, Periquillo," one of them was saying to the other; "you'll never lay eyes on it again as long as you live."

Hearing this, Don Quixote turned to Sancho. "Did you mark what that boy said, my friend?" he asked. "You'll never lay eyes on it<sup>68</sup> again . . ."

"Well," replied Sancho, "what difference does it make what he said?"

"What difference?" said Don Quixote. "Don't you see that, applied to the one I love, it means I shall never again see Dulcinea."

Sancho was about to answer him when his attention was distracted by a hare that came flying across the fields pursued by a large number of hunters with their greyhounds. The frightened animal took refuge by huddling down beneath the donkey, whereupon Sancho reached out his hand and caught it and presented it to his master.

"*Malum signum, malum signum,*"<sup>69</sup> the knight was muttering to himself. "A hare flees, the hounds pursue it, Dulcinea appears not."

68. the same as "her" in the original, since the reference is to a cricket cage, denoted in Spanish by a feminine noun; hence the Don's infer-

ence concerning Dulcinea.

69. a bad sign. Meeting a hare is considered an ill omen.

"It is very strange to hear your Grace talk like that," said Sancho. "Let us suppose that this hare is Dulcinea del Toboso and the hounds pursuing it are those wicked enchanters that transformed her into a peasant lass; she flees, I catch her and turn her over to your Grace, you hold her in your arms and caress her. Is that a bad sign? What ill omen can you find in it?"

The two lads who had been quarreling now came up to have a look at the hare, and Sancho asked them what their dispute was about. To this the one who had uttered the words "You'll never lay eyes on it again as long as you live," replied that he had taken a cricket cage from the other boy and had no intention of returning it ever. Sancho then brought out from his pocket four curatos and gave them to the lad in exchange for the cage, which he placed in Don Quixote's hands.

"There, master," he said, "these omens are broken and destroyed, and to my way of thinking, even though I may be a dunce, they have no more to do with what is going to happen to us than the clouds of yesteryear. If I am not mistaken, I have heard our curate say that sensible persons of the Christian faith should pay no heed to such foolish things, and you yourself in the past have given me to understand that all those Christians who are guided by omens are fools. But there is no need to waste a lot of words on the subject; come, let us go on and enter our village."

The hunters at this point came up and asked for the hare, and Don Quixote gave it to them. Continuing on their way, the returning pair encountered the curate and the bachelor Carrasco, who were strolling in a small meadow on the outskirts of the town as they read their breviaries. And here it should be mentioned that Sancho Panza, by way of sumpter cloth, had thrown over his gray and the bundle of armor it bore the flame-covered buckram robe in which they had dressed the squire at the duke's castle, on the night that witnessed Altisidora's<sup>70</sup> resurrection; and he had also fitted the miter over the donkey's head, the result being the weirdest transformation and the most bizarrely appareled ass that ever were seen in this world. The curate and the bachelor recognized the pair at once and came forward to receive them with open arms. Don Quixote dismounted and gave them both a warm embrace; meanwhile, the small boys (boys are like lynxes in that nothing escapes them), having spied the ass's miter, ran up for a closer view.

"Come, lads," they cried, "and see Sancho Panza's ass trigged out finer than Mingo,"<sup>71</sup> and Don Quixote's beast is skinnier than ever!"

Finally, surrounded by the urchins and accompanied by the

70. Altisidora was a girl in the duke's castle where Quixote and Sancho were guests for a time; she dramatically pretended to be in love with the Don.

71. The allusion is to the opening lines of a fifteenth-century satire, *Mingo Revulgo*.



curate and the bachelor, they entered the village and made their way to Don Quixote's house, where they found the housekeeper and the niece standing in the doorway, for the news of their return had preceded them. Teresa Panza, Sancho's wife, had also heard of it, and, half naked and disheveled, dragging her daughter Sanchica by the hand, she hastened to greet her husband and was disappointed when she saw him, for he did not look to her as well fitted out as a governor ought to be.

"How does it come, my husband," she said, "that you return like this, tramping and footsore? You look more like a vagabond than you do like a governor."

"Be quiet, Teresa," Sancho admonished her, "for very often there are stakes where there is no bacon. Come on home with me and you will hear marvels. I am bringing money with me, which is the thing that matters, money earned by my own efforts and without harm to anyone."

"You just bring along the money, my good husband," said Teresa, "and whether you got it here or there, or by whatever means, you will not be introducing any new custom into the world."

Sanchica then embraced her father and asked him if he had brought her anything, for she had been looking forward to his coming as to the showers in May. And so, with his wife holding him by the hand while his daughter kept one arm about his waist and at the same time led the gray, Sancho went home, leaving Don Quixote under his own roof in the company of niece and housekeeper, the curate and the barber.

Without regard to time or season, the knight at once drew his guests to one side and in a few words informed them of how he had been overcome in battle and had given his promise not to leave his village for a year, a promise that he meant to observe most scrupulously, without violating it in the slightest degree, as every knight-errant was obliged to do by the laws of chivalry. He accordingly meant to spend that year as a shepherd,<sup>72</sup> he said, amid the solitude of the fields, where he might give free rein to his amorous fancies as he practiced the virtues of the pastoral life; and he further begged them, if they were not too greatly occupied and more urgent matters did not prevent their doing so, to consent to be his companions. He would purchase a flock sufficiently large to justify their calling themselves shepherds; and, moreover, he would have them know, the most important thing of all had been taken care of, for he had hit upon names that would suit them marvelously well. When

72. Since the knight-errant's life has been forbidden him by his defeat, Don Quixote for a time plans to live according to another and no less "literary" code, that of the pastoral. In the

following paragraphs the author, especially through the bachelor Carrasco, refers humorously to some of the conventions of pastoral literature.

the curate asked him what these names were, Don Quixote replied that he himself would be known as "the shepherd Quixotiz," the bachelor as "the shepherd Carrascón," the curate as "the shepherd Curiambro," and Sancho Panza as "the shepherd Pancino."

Both his listeners were dismayed at the new form which his madness had assumed. However, in order that he might not go faring forth from the village on another of his expeditions (for they hoped that in the course of the year he would be cured), they decided to fall in with his new plan and approve it as being a wise one, and they even agreed to be his companions in the calling he proposed to adopt.

"What's more," remarked Sansón Carrasco, "I am a very famous poet, as everyone knows, and at every turn I will be composing pastoral or courtly verses or whatever may come to mind, by way of a diversion for us as we wander in those lonely places; but what is most necessary of all, my dear sirs, is that each one of us should choose the name of the shepherd lass to whom he means to dedicate his songs, so that we may not leave a tree, however hard its bark may be, where their names are not inscribed and engraved as is the custom with lovelorn shepherds."

"That is exactly what we should do," replied Don Quixote, "although, for my part, I am relieved of the necessity of looking for an imaginary shepherdess, seeing that I have the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso, glory of these brookside regions, adornment of these meadows, beauty's mainstay, cream of the Graces—in short, one to whom all praise is well becoming however hyperbolical it may be."

"That is right," said the curate, "but we will seek out some shepherd maids that are easily handled, who if they do not square with us will fit in the corners."

"And," added Sansón Carrasco, "if we run out of names we will give them those that we find printed in books the world over: such as Fílida, Amarilis, Diana, Flérída, Galatea, and Belisarda; for since these are for sale in the market place, we can buy them and make them our own. If my lady, or, rather, my shepherdess, should by chance be called Ana, I will celebrate her charms under the name of Anarda; if she is Francisca, she will become Francenia; if Lucía, Luscinda; for it all amounts to the same thing. And Sancho Panza, if he enters this confraternity, may compose verses to his wife, Teresa Panza, under the name of Tercsaina."

Don Quixote had to laugh at this, and the curate then went on to heap extravagant praise upon him for his noble resolution which did him so much credit, and once again he offered to keep the knight company whenever he could spare the time from the duties of his office. With this, they took their leave of him, advising and

beseeking him to take care of his health and to eat plentifully of the proper food.

As fate would have it, the niece and the housekeeper had overheard the conversation of the three men, and as soon as the visitors had left they both descended upon Don Quixote.

"What is the meaning of this, my uncle? Here we were thinking your Grace had come home to lead a quiet and respectable life, and do you mean to tell us you are going to get yourself involved in fresh complications—

Young shepherd, thou who comest here,

Young shepherd, thou who goest there . . .<sup>73</sup>

For, to tell the truth, the barley is too hard now to make shepherds' pipes of it."<sup>74</sup>

"And how," said the housekeeper, "is your Grace going to stand the midday heat in summer, the winter cold, the howling of the wolves out there in the fields? You certainly cannot endure it. That is an occupation for robust men, cut out and bred for such a calling almost from their swaddling clothes. Setting one evil over against another, it is better to be a knight-errant than a shepherd. Look, sir, take my advice, for I am not stuffed with bread and wine when I give it to you but am fasting and am going on fifty years of age: stay at home, attend to your affairs, go often to confession, be charitable to the poor, and let it be upon my soul if any harm comes to you as a result of it."

"Be quiet, daughters," said Don Quixote. "I know very well what I must do. Take me up to bed, for I do not feel very well; and you may be sure of one thing: whether I am a knight-errant now or a shepherd to be, I never will fail to look after your needs as you will see when the time comes."

And good daughters that they unquestionably were, the housekeeper and the niece helped him up to bed, where they gave him something to eat and made him as comfortable as they could.

#### CHAPTER 74

*Of how Don Quixote fell sick, of the will that he made, and of the manner of his death.*

Inasmuch as nothing that is human is eternal but is ever declining from its beginning to its close, this being especially true of the lives of men, and since Don Quixote was not endowed by Heaven with the privilege of staying the downward course of things, his own end came when he was least expecting it. Whether it was owing to

73. from a ballad.

74. a proverb.

melancholy occasioned by the defeat he had suffered, or was, simply, the will of Heaven which had so ordained it, he was taken with a fever that kept him in bed for a week, during which time his friends, the curate, the bachelor, and the barber, visited him frequently, while Sancho Panza, his faithful squire, never left his bedside.

Believing that the knight's condition was due to sorrow over his downfall and disappointment at not having been able to accomplish the disenchantment and liberation of Dulcinea, Sancho and the others endeavored to cheer him up in every possible way. The bachelor urged him to take heart and get up from bed that he might begin his pastoral life, adding that he himself had already composed an eclogue that would cast in the shade all that Sannazaro<sup>75</sup> had ever written, and had purchased with his own money from a herdsman of Quintanar two fine dogs to guard the flock, one of them named Barcino and the other Butrón. All this, however, did not serve to relieve Don Quixote's sadness; whereupon his friends called in the doctor, who took his pulse and was not very well satisfied with it. In any case, the physician told them, they should attend to the health of his soul as that of his body was in grave danger.

Don Quixote received this news calmly enough, but not so his housekeeper, niece, and squire, who began weeping bitterly, as if he were already lying dead in front of them. It was the doctor's opinion that melancholy and depression were putting an end to his patient's life. The knight then requested them to leave him alone as he wished to sleep a little, and they complied. He slept for more than six hours at a stretch, as the saying is, and so soundly that the housekeeper and niece thought he would never wake.

At last he did, however, and at once cried out in a loud voice, "Blessed be Almighty God who has given me so many blessings! Truly His mercy is boundless and is not limited or restrained by the sins of men."

The niece listened carefully to what her uncle said, and it seemed to her that he was speaking more rationally than was his wont, at least during his illness.

"Sir," she said to him, "what does your Grace mean? Has something occurred that we know nothing about? What is this talk of mercy and sins?"

"The mercy that I speak of," replied Don Quixote, "is that which God is showing me at this moment—in spite of my sins, as I have said. My mind now is clear, unencumbered by those misty shadows of ignorance that were cast over it by my bitter and continual reading of those hateful books of chivalry. I see through all the

75. the Italian poet Jacopo Sannazaro (1456?–1530), whose *Arcadia*

is one of the milestones in the pastoral tradition.

nonsense and fraud contained in them, and my only regret is that my disillusionment has come so late, leaving me no time to make any sort of amends by reading those that are the light of the soul. I find myself, niece, at the point of death, and I would die in such a way as not to leave the impression of a life so bad that I shall be remembered as a madman; for even though I have been one, I do not wish to confirm it on my deathbed. And so, my dear, call in my good friends: the curate, the bachelor Sansón Carrasco, and Master Nicholas the barber; for I want to confess my sins and make my last will and testament."

The niece, however, was relieved of this errand, for the three of them came in just then.

"I have good news for you, kind sirs," said Don Quixote the moment he saw them. "I am no longer Don Quixote de la Mancha but Alonso Quijano, whose mode of life won for him the name of 'Good.' I am the enemy of Amadis of Gaul and all his innumerable progeny; for those profane stories dealing with knight-errantry are odious to me, and I realize how foolish I was and the danger I courted in reading them; but I am in my right senses now and I abominate them."

Hearing this, they all three were convinced that some new kind of madness must have laid hold of him.

"Why, Señor Don Quixote!" exclaimed Sansón. "What makes you talk like that, just when we have received news that my lady Dulcinea is disenchanted?<sup>76</sup> And just when we are on the verge of becoming shepherds so that we may spend the rest of our lives in singing like a lot of princes, why does your Grace choose to turn hermit? Say no more, in Heaven's name, but be sensible and forget these idle tales."

"Tales of that kind," said Don Quixote, "have been the truth for me in the past, and to my detriment, but with Heaven's aid I trust to turn them to my profit now that I am dying. For I feel, gentlemen, that death is very near; so, leave all jesting aside and bring me a confessor for my sins and a notary to draw up my will. In such straits as these a man cannot trifle with his soul. Accordingly, while the Señor Curate is hearing my confession, let the notary be summoned."

Amazed at his words, they gazed at one another in some perplexity, yet they could not but believe him. One of the signs that led them to think he was dying was this quick return from madness to sanity and all the additional things he had to say, so well reasoned and well put and so becoming in a Christian that none of them could any longer doubt that he was in full possession of his

76. Sancho had imagined for the sake of his master that Dulcinea had been transformed into a country wench by

enchanters, but ended up by believing his own invention.

faculties. Sending the others out of the room, the curate stayed behind to confess him, and before long the bachelor returned with the notary and Sancho Panza, who had been informed of his master's condition, and who, finding the housekeeper and the niece in tears, began weeping with them. When the confession was over, the curate came out.

"It is true enough," he said, "that Alonso Quijano the Good is dying, and it is also true that he is a sane man. It would be well for us to go in now while he makes his will."

At this news the housekeeper, niece, and the good squire Sancho Panza were so overcome with emotion that the tears burst forth from their eyes and their bosoms heaved with sobs; for, as has been stated more than once, whether Don Quixote was plain Alonso Quijano the Good or Don Quixote de la Mancha, he was always of a kindly and pleasant disposition and for this reason was beloved not only by the members of his household but by all who knew him.

The notary had entered along with the others, and as soon as the preamble had been attended to and the dying man had commended his soul to his Maker with all those Christian formalities that are called for in such a case, they came to the matter of bequests, with Don Quixote dictating as follows:

"ITEM. With regard to Sancho Panza, whom, in my madness, I appointed to be my squire, and who has in his possession a certain sum of money belonging to me: inasmuch as there has been a standing account between us, of debits and credits, it is my will that he shall not be asked to give any accounting whatsoever of this sum, but if any be left over after he has had payment for what I owe him, the balance, which will amount to very little, shall be his, and much good may it do him. If when I was mad I was responsible for his being given the governorship of an island, now that I am of sound mind I would present him with a kingdom if it were in my power, for his simplicity of mind and loyal conduct merit no less."

At this point he turned to Sancho. "Forgive me, my friend," he said, "for having caused you to appear as mad as I by leading you to fall into the same error, that of believing that there are still knights-errant in the world."

"Ah, master," cried Sancho through his tears, "don't die, your Grace, but take my advice and go on living for many years to come, for the greatest madness that a man can be guilty of in this life is to die without good reason, without anyone's killing him, slain only by the hands of melancholy. Look you, don't be lazy but get up from this bed and let us go out into the fields clad as shepherds as we agreed to do. Who knows but behind some bush we may come upon the lady Dulcinea, as disenchanted as you could wish. If it is because of worry over your defeat that you are dying, put the blame

on me by saying that the reason for your being overthrown was that I had not properly fastened Rocinante's girth. For the matter of that, your Grace knows from reading your books of chivalry that it is a common thing for certain knights to overthrow others, and he who is vanquished today will be the victor tomorrow."

"That is right," said Sansón, "the worthy Sancho speaks the truth."

"Not so fast, gentlemen," said Don Quixote. "In last year's nests there are no birds this year. I was mad and now I am sane; I was Don Quixote de la Mancha, and now I am, as I have said, Alonso Quijano the Good. May my repentance and the truth I now speak restore to me the place I once held in your esteem. And now, let the notary proceed:

"ITEM. I bequeath my entire estate, without reservation, to my niece Antonia Quijana, here present, after the necessary deductions shall have been made from the most available portion of it to satisfy the bequests that I have stipulated. The first payment shall be to my housekeeper for the wages due her, with twenty ducats over to buy her a dress. And I hereby appoint the Señor Curate and the Señor Bachelor Sansón Carrasco to be my executors.

"ITEM. It is my will that if my niece Antonia Quijana should see fit to marry, it shall be to a man who does not know what books of chivalry are; and if it shall be established that he is acquainted with such books and my niece still insists on marrying him, then she shall lose all that I have bequeathed her and my executors shall apply her portion to works of charity as they may see fit.

"ITEM. I entreat the aforementioned gentlemen, my executors, if by good fortune they should come to know the author who is said to have composed a history now going the rounds under the title of *Second Part of the Exploits of Don Quixote de la Mancha*, to beg his forgiveness in my behalf, as earnestly as they can, since it was I who unthinkingly led him to set down so many and such great absurdities as are to be found in it; for I leave this life with a feeling of remorse at having provided him with the occasion for putting them into writing."

The will ended here, and Don Quixote, stretching himself at length in the bed, fainted away. They all were alarmed at this and hastened to aid him. The same thing happened very frequently in the course of the three days of life that remained to him after he had made his will. The household was in a state of excitement, but with it all the niece continued to eat her meals, the housekeeper had her drink, and Sancho Panza was in good spirits; for this business of inheriting property effaces or mitigates the sorrow which the heir ought to feel and causes him to forget.

Death came at last for Don Quixote, after he had received all

the sacraments and once more, with many forceful arguments, had expressed his abomination of books of chivalry. The notary who was present remarked that in none of those books had he read of any knight-errant dying in his own bed so peacefully and in so Christian a manner. And thus, amid the tears and lamentations of those present, he gave up the ghost; that is to say, he died. Perceiving that their friend was no more, the curate asked the notary to be a witness to the fact that Alonso Quijano the Good, commonly known as Don Quixote, was truly dead, this being necessary in order that some author other than Cid Hamete Benengeli might not have the opportunity of falsely resurrecting him and writing endless histories of his exploits.

Such was the end of the Ingenious Gentleman of La Mancha, whose birthplace Cid Hamete was unwilling to designate exactly in order that all the towns and villages of La Mancha might contend among themselves for the right to adopt him and claim him as their own, just as the seven cities of Greece did in the case of Homer. The lamentations of Sancho and those of Don Quixote's niece and his housekeeper, as well as the original epitaphs that were composed for his tomb, will not be recorded here, but mention may be made of the verses by Sansón Carrasco:

Here lies a gentleman bold  
 Who was so very brave  
 He went to lengths untold,  
 And on the brink of the grave  
 Death had on him no hold.  
 By the world he set small store—  
 He frightened it to the core—  
 Yet somehow, by Fate's plan,  
 Though he'd lived a crazy man,  
**When he died he was sane once more.**



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

(1564–1616)

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark\*

Characters

CLAUDIUS, king of Denmark  
HAMLET, son to the late, and  
    nephew to the present king  
POLONIUS, lord chamberlain  
HORATIO, friend to Hamlet  
LAERTES, son to Polonius  
VOLTIMAND,  
CORNELIUS,  
ROSENCRANTZ, } courtiers  
GUILDENSTERN, }  
OSRIC,  
GENTLEMAN, .  
PRIEST  
MARCELLUS, } officers  
BERNARDO, }

FRANCISCO, a soldier  
REYNALDO, servant to Polonius  
PLAYERS  
TWO CLOWNS, grave-diggers  
FORTINBRAS, prince of Norway  
CAPTAIN  
ENGLISH AMBASSADORS  
GERTRUDE, queen of Denmark,  
    and mother to Hamlet  
OPHELIA, daughter of Polonius  
LORDS, LADIES, OFFICERS, SOL-  
    DIERS, SAILORS, MESSENGERS,  
    and OTHER ATTENDANTS  
GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER

SCENE—Denmark.

Act I

SCENE 1—Elsinore. A platform before the castle.

[FRANCISCO at his post. Enter to him BERNARDO.]

BERNARDO. Who's there?

FRANCISCO. Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

BERNARDO. Long live the king!

FRANCISCO. Bernardo?

BERNARDO. He.

FRANCISCO. You come most carefully upon your hour.

BERNARDO. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

FRANCISCO. For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,

And I am sick at heart.

BERNARDO. Have you had quiet guard?

FRANCISCO.

Not a mouse stirring.

BERNARDO. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,

The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

\* Usually dated 1601.

9. *sick at heart*: depressed.

13. *rivals*: partners.

FRANCISCO. I think I hear them: Stand, ho! Who is there?

[Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.]

HORATIO. Friends to this ground.

MARCELLUS. And liegemen to the Dane. 15

FRANCISCO. Give you good night.

MARCELLUS. O, farewell, honest soldier:

Who hath relieved you?

FRANCISCO. Bernardo hath my place.

Give you good night. [Exit.]

MARCELLUS. Holla! Bernardol

BERNARDO. Say,

What, is Horatio there?

HORATIO. A piece of him.

BERNARDO. Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus. 20

MARCELLUS. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

BERNARDO. I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,

And will not let belief take hold of him

Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us: 25

Therefore I have entreated him along

With us to watch the minutes of this night,

That if again this apparition come,

He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HORATIO. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BERNARDO. Sit down a while; 30

And let us once again assail your ears,

That are so fortified against our story,

What we have two nights seen.

HORATIO. Well, sit we down,

And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

BERNARDO. Last night of all, 35

When yond same star that's westward from the pole

Had made his course to illume that part of heaven

Wherc now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

The bell then beating one,—

[Enter GHOST.]

MARCELLUS. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again! 40

BERNARDO. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

MARCELLUS. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

BERNARDO. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO. Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

15. *the Dane*: the king of Denmark.  
29. *approve our eyes*: confirm what we saw.

31–33. *assail your ears . . . seen*: try to convince you by telling the story

again.

42. *Thou art a scholar*: and therefore, the implication is, you know how to handle this.

BERNARDO. It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS. Question it, Horatio. 45

HORATIO. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the majesty of buried Denmark

Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!

MARCELLUS. It is offended.

BERNARDO. Sec, it stalks away! 50

HORATIO. Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

[Exit GHOST.]

MARCELLUS. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

BERNARDO. How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:

Is not this something more than fantasy?

What think you on't? 55

HORATIO. Before my God, I might not this believe

Without the sensible and true avouch

Of mine own eyes.

MARCELLUS. Is it not like the king?

HORATIO. As thou art to thyself:

Such was the very armor he had on 60

When he the ambitious Norway combated;

So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,

He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.

'Tis strange.

MARCELLUS. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour, 65

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

HORATIO. In what particular thought to work I know not;

But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,

'Tis bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MARCELLUS. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows, 70

Why this same strict and most observant watch

So nightly toils the subject of the land,

And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,

And foreign mart for implements of war;

Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task 75

Does not divide the Sunday from the week;

What might be toward, that this sweaty haste

Doth make the night joint-laborer with the day:

Who is't that can inform me?

HORATIO.

That can I;

48. *Denmark*: the king of Denmark.

49. *sometimes*: formerly.

61. *Norway*: the king of Norway  
(the elder Fortinbras).

62. *parle*: parley.

63. *sledded*: who travel in sledges.

65. *jump*: just.

68. *in the gross . . . opinion*: taking a general view.

72. *toils the subject*: makes the people (the subjects) toil.

74. *mart*: traffic.

75. *impress of shipwrights*: forcing of ship carpenters into service.

77. *toward*: impending.

At least the whisper goes so. Our last king,  
 Whose image even but now appear'd to us,  
 Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,  
 Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,  
 Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet—  
 For so this side of our known world esteem'd him—  
 Did slay this Fortinbras; who by a seal'd compact  
 Well ratified by law and heraldry,  
 Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands  
 Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror:  
 Against the which, a moiety competent  
 Was gaged by our king; which had return'd  
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,  
 Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant  
 And carriage of the article design'd,  
 His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,  
 Of unimprov'd metal hot and full,  
 Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there  
 Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,  
 For food and diet, to some enterprise  
 That hath a stomach in't: which is no other—  
 As it doth well appear unto our state—  
 But to recover of us, by strong hand  
 And terms compulsory, those foresaid lands  
 So by his father lost: and this, I take it,  
 Is the main motive of our preparations,  
 The source of this our watch and the chief head  
 Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

BERNARDO. I think it be no other but e'en so:  
 Well may it sort, that this portentous figure  
 Comes arm'd through our watch, so like the king  
 That was and is the question of these wars.

HORATIO. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.  
 In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead  
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:  
 As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,

83. *emulate*: emulous.  
 87. *Well ratified* . . . *heraldry*: duly ratified and proclaimed through heralds.  
 89. *seized*: possessed.  
 90. *moiety competent*: adequate part.  
 91. *gaged*: pledged.  
 94. *carriage*: purport.  
 96. *unimprov'd*: unused.  
 97. *skirts*: outskirts, border regions.

100. *hath a stomach*: calls for courage (compare, "guts").  
 101. *state*: government.  
 106. *head*: origin, cause.  
 107. *romage*: bustle.  
 109. *sort*: happen.  
 112. *mote*: small particle (as of dust).

Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,  
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,  
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse: 120  
And even the like precursor of fierce events,  
As harbingers preceding still the fates  
And prologue to the omen coming on,  
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climatures and countrymen. 125

[*Re-enter GHOST.*]

But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!  
I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!  
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,  
Speak to me:  
If there be any good thing to be done, 130  
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,  
Speak to me:  
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,  
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,  
O, speak!  
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life  
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,  
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,  
Speak of it: stay, and speak! [*The cock crows.*] Stop it, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS. Shall I strike at it with my partisan? 140

HORATIO. Do, if it will not stand.

BERNARDO. 'Tis here!

HORATIO. 'Tis here!

MARCELLUS. 'Tis gone! [*Exit GHOST.*]

We do it wrong, being so majestic,  
To offer it the show of violence;  
For it is, as the air, invulnerable, 145  
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

BERNARDO. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

HORATIO. And then it started like a guilty thing  
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,  
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn, 150  
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat  
Awake the god of day, and at his warning,  
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,

118. *Disasters*: ill omens; *the moist star*: the moon.

119. *Upon . . . stands*: The moon regulates the sea tides.

121. *precursor*: foreboding.

122. *harbingers*: forerunners.

123. *omen*: dire event portended by omen.

125. *climatures*: regions.

128-139. *If thou . . . speak*: Horatio, a scholar, knows how to address a ghost with the appropriate formulas.

140. *partisan*: spear.

The extravagant and crring spirit hies  
 To his confine: and of the truth herein 155  
 'This present object made probation.

MARCELLUS. It faded on the crowing of the cock.  
 Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
 Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
 The bird of dawning singeth all night long: 160  
 And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad,  
 The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,  
 No fairy takes nor witch hath power to charm,  
 So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

HORATIO. So have I heard and do in part believe it. 165  
 But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
 Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill:  
 Break we our watch up; and by my advice,  
 Let us impart what we have seen to-night  
 Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life, 170  
 This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him:  
 Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,  
 As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

MARCELLUS. Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know  
 Where we shall find him most conveniently. 175  
 [Exeunt.]

SCENE 2—A room of state in the castle.

[*Flourish. Enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS,  
 LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, LORDS, and ATTENDANTS.*]

KING. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
 The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
 To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom  
 To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature 5  
 That we with wisest sorrow think on him,  
 Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
 The imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
 Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,— 10  
 With an auspicious and a dropping eye,  
 With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
 In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—

154. *extravagant*: wandering out of its confines.

156. *made probation*: gave proof.

158. *'gainst*: just before.

162. *strike*: exercise evil influence (compare, "moonstruck").

163. *takes*: bewitches.

164. *gracious*: full of blessing.

5. *discretion*: restraint (here, on grief).

9. *jointress*: a widow who has the life tenancy on an estate.

13. *dole*: grief.

Taken to wife: nor have we hercin barr'd  
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone 15  
 With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
 Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,  
 Holding a weak supposal of our worth,  
 Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame, 20  
 Colleague'd with this dream of his advantage,  
 He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,  
 Importing the surrender of those lands  
 Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,  
 To our most valiant brother. So much for him. 25  
 Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting:  
 Thus much the business is: we have here writ  
 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—  
 Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears  
 Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress 30  
 His further gait herein; in that the levies,  
 The lists and full proportions, are all made  
 Out of his subject: and we here dispatch  
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,  
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway, 35  
 Giving to you no further personal power  
 T' business with the king more than the scope  
 Of these delated articles allow.  
 Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

CORNELIUS. }  
 VOLTIMAND. } In that and all things will we show our duty. 40  
 KING. We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
 You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?  
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,  
 And lose your voice: what wouldst thou beg, Laertes, 45  
 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?  
 The head is not more native to the heart,  
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
 Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
 What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

LAERTES. My dread lord, 50  
 Your leave and favor to return to France,

14. *barr'd*: ignored.  
 20. *disjoint*: disjointed, disorganized.  
 21. *Colleague'd with this dream*:  
 combined with this fantastic notion.  
 31. *gait*: proceeding.  
 33. *subject*: subjects, people.  
 38. *delated*: detailed.  
 44. *the Dane*: the king of Den-  
 mark.  
 47. *native to*: naturally bound to.

From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,  
 To show my duty in your coronation,  
 Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,  
 My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France 55  
 And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING. Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

POLONIUS. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave  
 By laborsome petition, and at last  
 Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent: 60  
 I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING. Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,  
 And thy best graces spend it at thy will!

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

HAMLET. [*Aside*] A little more than kin, and less than kind. 65

KING. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET. Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.

QUEEN. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,  
 And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
 Do not for ever with thy vailèd lids 70  
 Seek for thy noble father in the dust:  
 Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,  
 Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET. Aye, madam, it is common.

QUEEN. If it be,  
 Why seems it so particular with thee? 75

HAMLET. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not 'seems.'

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
 Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
 Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye, 80  
 Nor the dejected havior of the visage,  
 Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
 That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,  
 For they are actions that a man might play:  
 But I have that within which passeth show; 85  
 These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
 To give these mourning duties to your father:  
 But, you must know, your father lost a father,  
 That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound 90  
 In filial obligation for some term

66–67. *How . . . sun*: The cue to Hamlet's irony is given by the King's words "my cousin . . . my son" in l. 64. In his statement that clouds do not hang on him because he is "too

much i' the sun," Hamlet is punning on "son."

69. *Denmark*: the king of Denmark.

70. *vailèd*: downcast.

79. *suspiration*: breathing.

81. *havior*: outer deportment.



To do obsequious sorrow: but to persevere  
 In obstinate condolement is a course  
 Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:  
 It shows a will most incorrect to heaven, 95  
 A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,  
 An understanding simple and unschool'd:  
 For what we know must be and is as common  
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,  
 Why should we in our peevish opposition 100  
 Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,  
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,  
 To reason most absurd, whose common theme  
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,  
 From the first corse till he that died to-day, 105  
 'This must be so.' We pray you, throw to earth  
 This unprevailing woe, and think of us  
 As of a father: for let the world take note,  
 You are the most immediate to our throne,  
 And with no less nobility of love 110  
 Than that which dearest father bears his son  
 Do I impart toward you. For your intent  
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,  
 It is most retrograde to our desire:  
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain 115  
 Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin and our son.

QUEEN. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:

I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET. I shall in all my best obey you, madam. 120

KING. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:—

Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;  
 This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
 Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,  
 No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day, 125  
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
 And the king's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,  
 Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Flourish. Exeunt all but HAMLET.*]

HAMLET. O, that this too too sullied flesh would melt,  
 Thaw and resolve itself into a dew! 130  
 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

92. *obsequious*: dutiful, especially concerning funeral rites (obsequies).

95. *incorrect*: not subdued.

107. *unprevailing*: useless.

113. *Wittenberg*: the seat of a university; at the peak of fame in

Shakespeare's time on account of its connection with Luther.

114. *retrograde*: opposed.

127. *rouse*: carousal, revel. *bruit*: proclaim, echo.

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!  
 How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable  
 Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
 Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
 That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature 135  
 Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
 But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two:  
 So excellent a king; that was, to this,  
 Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother, 140  
 That he might not betwixt the winds of heaven  
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!  
 Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,  
 As if increase of appetite had grown  
 By what it fed on: and yet, within a month— 145  
 Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!—  
 A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
 With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
 Like Niobe, all tears:—why she, even she,—  
 O God! a beast that wants discourse of reason 150  
 Would have mourn'd longer,—married with my uncle,  
 My father's brother, but no more like my father  
 Than I to Hercules: within a month;  
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
 Had left the flushing in her gall'd eyes, 155  
 She married. O, most wicked speed, to post  
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
 It is not, nor it cannot come to good:  
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!  
 [Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.]

HORATIO. Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET. I am glad to see you well: 160

Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

HORATIO. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

HAMLET. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?

Marcellus? 165

MARCELLUS. My good lord?

HAMLET. I am very glad to see you. [To BERNARDO] Good even, sir.

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

132. *canon*: law.

140. *Hyperion*: the sun-god.

141. *betwixt*: allow.

149. *Niobe*: Her seven sons and seven daughters were slain by Apollo and Artemis, and sorrow changed her into a continually weeping stone.

150. *wants discourse of reason*: lacks the reasoning faculty.

155. *gall'd*: inflamed.

157. *incestuous*: According to principles which Hamlet accepts, marrying one's brother's widow is incest.

HORATIO. A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET. I would not hear your enemy say so, 170

Nor shall you do my ear that violence,  
To make it truster of your own report  
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.

But what is your affair in Elsinore?

We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart. 175

HORATIO. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

HAMLET. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;

I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

HORATIO. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

HAMLET. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked-meats 180

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!

My father!—methinks I see my father.

HORATIO. O where, my lord?

HAMLET. In my mind's eye, Horatio. 185

HORATIO. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

HAMLET. He was a man, take him for all in all,

I shall not look upon his like again.

HORATIO. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAMLET. Saw? who? 190

HORATIO. My lord, the king your father.

HAMLET. The king my father!

HORATIO. Season your admiration for a while

With an attent ear, till I may deliver,

Upon the witness of these gentlemen,

This marvel to you.

HAMLET. For God's love, let me hear. 195

HORATIO. Two nights together had these gentlemen,

Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,

In the dead vast and middle of the night,

Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,

Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe, 200

Appears before them, and with solemn march

Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd

By their oppress'd and fear-surpris'd eyes,

Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd

Almost to jelly with the act of fear, 205

169. *A truant disposition*: an idling mood.

173. *no truant*: no idler.

181. *coldly*: when cold.

182. *dearest*: bitterest. "Dear" was used by the Elizabethans to denote

intensity of feeling in either direction.

192. *Season your admiration*: restrain your astonishment.

200. *at point*: completely. *cap-a-pe*: from head to foot.

Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me  
 In dreadful secrecy impart they did;  
 And I with them the third night kept the watch:  
 Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,  
 Form of the thing, each word made true and good,  
 The apparition comes: I knew your father;  
 These hands were not more like.

HAMLET.

But where was this?

MARCELLUS. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

HAMLET. Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO.

My lord, I did.

But answer made it none: yet once methought  
 It lifted up its head and did address  
 Itself to motion, like as it would speak:  
 But even then the morning cock crew loud,  
 And at the sound it shrunk in haste away  
 And vanish'd from our sight.

HAMLET.

'Tis very strange.

HORATIO. As I do live, my honor'd lord, 'tis true,

And we did think it writ down in our duty  
 To let you know of it.

HAMLET. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.

Hoid you the watch to-night?

MARCELLUS. }

We do, my lord.

BERNARDO.

HAMLET. Arm'd, say you?

MARCELLUS. }

Arm'd, my lord.

BERNARDO. }

HAMLET.

From top to toe?

MARCELLUS. }

BERNARDO. }

My lord, from head to foot.

HAMLET. Then saw you not his face?

HORATIO. O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.

230

HAMLET. What, look'd he frowningly?

HORATIO. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET. Pale, or red?

HORATIO. Nay, very pale.

HAMLET.

And fix'd his eyes upon you?

HORATIO. Most constantly.

HAMLET.

I would I had been there.

235

HORATIO. It would have much amazed you.

HAMLET. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

HORATIO. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

MARCELLUS. }  
BERNARDO. } Longer, longer.

HORATIO. Not when I saw't.

HAMLET. His beard was grizzled? no? 240

HORATIO. It was, as I have seen it in his life,

A sable silver'd.

HAMLET. I will watch to-night;

Perchance 'twill walk again.

HORATIO. I warrant it will.

HAMLET. If it assume my noble father's person,  
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape 245

And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,

If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,

Let it be tenable in your silence still,

And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,

Give it an understanding, but no tongue: 250

I will requite your loves. So fare you well:

Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,

I'll visit you.

ALL. Our duty to your honor.

HAMLET. Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET.*]

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well; 255

I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!

Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,

Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE 3—A room in Polonius's house.

[*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*]

LAERTES. My necessaries are embark'd: farewell:

And, sister, as the winds give benefit

And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,

But let me hear from you.

OPHELIA. Do you doubt that?

LAERTES. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor, 5

Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood,

A violet in the youth of primy nature,

Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,

The perfume and suppliance of a minute;

No more.

OPHELIA. No more but so?

242. *sable*: black.

248. *Let it be tenable in your silence*: consider it still a secret.

256. *doubt*: suspect.

3. *convoy*: conveyance.

6. *a fashion*: a passing mood.

7. *primy*: early, young.

8. *Forward*: early.

LAERTES.

Think it no more:

10

For nature crescent does not grow alone  
 In thews and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,  
 The inward service of the mind and soul  
 Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now;  
 And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch  
 The virtue of his will: but you must fear,  
 His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;  
 For he himself is subject to his birth:  
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
 Carve for himself, for on his choice depends  
 The safety and health of this whole state,  
 And therefore must his choice be circumscribed  
 Unto the voice and yielding of that body  
 Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,  
 It fits your wisdom so far to believe it  
 As he in his particular act and place  
 May give his saying deed; which is no further  
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
 Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain,  
 If with too credent ear you list his songs,  
 Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
 To his unmaster'd importunity.

15

20

25

30

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,  
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.  
 The chariest maid is prodigal enough,  
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon:  
 Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:

35

The canker galls the infants of the spring  
 Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,  
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.

40

Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:

Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPHELIA. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,  
 As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,  
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,  
 Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,

45

11. *crescent*: growing.12. *this temple*: the body.15. *no soil nor cautel*: no foul or deceitful thoughts.17. *His greatness weigh'd*: when you consider his rank.20. *Carve*: choose.23. *yielding*: assent.28. *main*: powerful. *goes withal*: goes along with, agrees.30. *credent*: credulous.36. *chariest*: most thoughtful.39. *canker*: caterpillar.

Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads  
And recks not his own rede. 50

LAERTES. O, fear me not.

I stay too long; but here my father comes.

[Enter POLONIUS.]

A double blessing is a double grace;  
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POLONIUS. Yet here, Laertes! Aboard, aboard, for shame! 55

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,  
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!

And these few precepts in thy memory  
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act. 60

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,

Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel,  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatch'd unfledged comrade. Beware 65

Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,

Bear't, that the opposèd may beware of thee.

Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice:

Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, 70

But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:

For the apparel oft proclaims the man;

And they in France of the best rank and station

Are of a most select and generous chief in that.

Neither a borrower nor a lender be: 75

For loan oft loses both itself and friend,

And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.

This above all: to thine own self be true,

And it must follow, as the night the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man. 80

Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

LAERTES. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS. The time invites you; go, your servants tend.

LAERTES. Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well

What I have said to you.

OPHELIA. 'Tis in my memory lock'd, 85

And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

51. *recks not his own rede*: does not follow his own advice.

59. *character*: engrave in your memory.

60. *unproportion'd*: unsuitable.

64. *dull thy palm*: make the palm of your hand callous (by indiscrim-

inate handshaking).

69. *censure*: opinion.

74. *chief*: chiefly.

77. *husbandry*: economy.

81. *season*: ripen.

83. *tend*: wait.

LAERTES. Farewell.

[Exit.]

POLONIUS. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

OPHELIA. So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

POLONIUS. Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late 90

Given private time to you, and you yourself

Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:

If it be so—as so 'tis put on me,

And that in way of caution—I must tell you,

You do not understand yourself so clearly 95

As it behoves my daughter and your honor.

What is between you? give me up the truth.

OPHELIA. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders

Of his affection to me.

POLONIUS. Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl, 100

Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPHELIA. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

POLONIUS. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby,

That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay, 105

Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;

Or—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,

Running it thus—you'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA. My lord, he hath importuned me with love

In honorable fashion. 110

POLONIUS. Aye, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

OPHELIA. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

POLONIUS. Aye, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,

When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul 115

Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,

Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,

Even in their promise, as it is a-making,

You must not take for fire. From this time

Be something scanter of your maiden presence; 120

Set your entreatments at a higher rate

Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,

Believe so much in him, that he is young,

And with a larger tether may he walk

Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia, 125

Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,

98. *tenders*: offers.101. *Unsiſted*: untried.106. *Tender yourself*: regard yourself.108. *you'll tender me a fool*: you'll furnish me with a fool (a foolish daugh-

ter).

112. *countenance*: authority.114. *springes*: snares.121. *entreatments*: conversation, company.126. *brokers*: procurers, panders.



Not of that dye which their investments show,  
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,  
 The better to beguile. This is for all: 130  
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,  
 Have you so slander any moment leisure,  
 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.  
 Look to't, I charge you: come you ways.  
 OPHELIA. I shall obey, my lord. 135  
 [Exeunt.]

SCENE 4—*The platform.*

[Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.]  
 HAMLET. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.  
 HORATIO. It is a nipping and an eager air.  
 HAMLET. What hour now?  
 HORATIO. I think it lacks of twelve.  
 MARCELLUS. No, it is struck.  
 HORATIO. Indeed? I heard it not: it then draws near the season 5  
 Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.  
 [A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off within.]  
 What doth this mean, my lord?  
 HAMLET. The king doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,  
 Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;  
 And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down, 10  
 The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
 The triumph of his pledge.  
 HORATIO. Is it a custom?  
 HAMLET. Aye, marry, is't:  
 But to my mind, though I am native here  
 And to the manner born, it is a custom, 15  
 More honor'd in the breach than the observance.  
 This heavy-headed revel east and west  
 Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations:  
 They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
 Soil our addition; and indeed it takes 20  
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,  
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
 So, oft it chances in particular men,  
 That for some vicious mole of nature in them,

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 127. <i>investments</i> : clothes.                            | 18. <i>tax'd</i> : blamed.   |
| 132. <i>slander</i> : use badly. <i>moment</i> : momentary.   | 19. <i>clepe</i> : call.   |
| 2. <i>eager</i> : sharp.                                      | 20. <i>addition</i> : title, reputation.                           |
| 9. <i>up-spring</i> : a wild dance.                           | 21. <i>perform'd at height</i> : done in the best possible manner. |
| 10. <i>Rhenish</i> : Rhine wine.                              | 22. <i>attribute</i> : reputation.                                 |
| 12. <i>The triumph of his pledge</i> : his drinking exploits. | 24. <i>mole of nature</i> : natural blemish.                       |

As, in their birth,—wherein they are not guilty, 25  
 Since nature cannot choose his origin,—  
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,  
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
 Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens  
 The form of plausive manners, that these men,— 30  
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—  
 Their virtues else—be they as pure as grace,  
 As infinite as man may undergo—  
 Shall in the general censure take corruption 35  
 From that particular fault: the dram of evil  
 Doth all the noble substance often dout  
 To his own scandal.

[Enter GHOST.]

HORATIO. Look, my lord it comes!

HAMLET. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd, 40  
 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
 Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
 Thou comest in such a questionable shape  
 That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,  
 King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me! 45  
 Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell  
 Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,  
 Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,  
 Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,  
 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws, 50  
 To cast thee up again. What may this mean,  
 That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel,  
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
 Making night hideous; and we fools of nature  
 So horribly to shake our disposition 55  
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?  
 Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[GHOST beckons HAMLET.]

HORATIO. It beckons you to go away with it,

As if it some impartment did desire

26. *his*: its.

27. *o'ergrowth of some complexion*: excess in one side of their temperament.

29. *o'er-leavens*: modifies.

30. *plausive*: agreeable.

32. *nature's livery, or fortune's star*: a nature-given trait or an accidental mark.

33. *Their virtues else*: the rest of their qualities.

36–37. *the dram . . . often dout*: our text follows Kittredge's reading of this difficult passage.

36. *dram*: small bit.

37. *dout*: extinguish, nullify.

38. *To his own scandal*: to its own harm.

48. *cerements*: shroud made of waxed cloth.

To you alone.

MARCELLUS. Look, with what courteous action  
It waves you to a more removed ground:  
But do not go with it. 60

HORATIO. No, by no means.

HAMLET. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

HORATIO. Do not, my lord.

HAMLET. Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee;  
And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself? 65  
It waves me forth again: I'll follow it.

HORATIO. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,  
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff  
That beetles o'er his base into the sea, 70  
And there assume some other horrible form,  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
And draw you into madness? think of it:  
The very place puts toys of desperation,  
Without more motive, into every brain 75  
That looks so many fathoms to the sea  
And hears it roar beneath.

HAMLET. It waves me still.

Go on; I'll follow thee.

MARCELLUS. You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET. Hold off your hands. 80

HORATIO. Be ruled; you shall not go.

HAMLET. My fate cries out,

And makes each petty artery in this body  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.  
Still am I call'd, unhand me, gentlemen;  
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me: 85  
I say, away! Go on; I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt GHOST and HAMLET.*]

HORATIO. He waxes desperate with imagination.

MARCELLUS. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

HORATIO. Have after. To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark. 90

HORATIO. Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS. Nay, let's follow him.

[*Exeunt.*]

65. *fee*: value.

71. *beetles o'er*: juts over.

73. *deprive . . . reason*: deprive you of reason, your sovereign quality.

75. *toys*: fancies.

83. *Nemean lion*: slain by Hercules as one of his twelve labors. *nerve*: muscle.

85. *lets*: hinders.

## SCENE 5—Another part of the platform.

[Enter GHOST and HAMLET.]

HAMLET. Whither wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

GHOST. Mark me.

HAMLET. I will.

GHOST. My hour is almost come,

When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames

Must render up myself.

HAMLET. Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing

To what I shall unfold. 5

HAMLET. Speak; I am bound to hear.

GHOST. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET. What?

GHOST. I am thy father's spirit;

Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night, 10

And for the day confined to fast in fires,

Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature

Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid

To tell the secrets of my prison-house,

I could a tale unfold whose lightest word 15

Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,

Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,

Thy knotted and combined locks to part

And each particular hair to stand on end,

Like quills upon the fretful porpentine: 20

But this eternal blazon must not be

To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!

If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

HAMLET. O God!

GHOST. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder. 25

HAMLET. Murder!

GHOST. Murder most foul, as in the best it is,

But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

HAMLET. Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift

As meditation or the thoughts of love, 30

May sweep to my revenge.

GHOST. I find thee apt;

And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed

That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,

Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:

3. *flames*: of purgatory.20. *porpentine*: porcupine.21. *eternal blazon*: publication of secrets of the other world (i.e., of

eternity).

33. *Lethe*: the river of oblivion in Hades.

'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark  
Is by a forgèd process of my death  
Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown. 35

HAMLET. O my prophetic soul!  
My uncle! 40

GHOST. Aye, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,—  
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power  
So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust 45  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:  
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!  
From me, whose love was of that dignity  
That it went hand in hand even with the vow  
I made to her in marriage; and to decline 50  
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor  
To those of mine!

But virtue, as it never will be moved,  
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,  
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed 55  
And prey on garbage.

But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
My custom always of the afternoon, 60  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,  
And in the porches of my ears did pour  
The leperous distilment; whose effect 65

Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
The natural gates and alleys of the body;  
And with a sudden vigor it doth posset  
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine; 70  
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,  
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
All my smooth body.

54. *a shape of heaven*: a heavenly, angelic form.

62. *hebenon*: henbane, a very poisonous herb.

68. *posset*: coagulate.

69. *eager*: sour (compare "vinegar"; in French, *vinaigre*, from *vin aigre*).

71. *a most instant . . . about*: the skin immediately became thick like the bark of a tree.

72. *lazar*: leper (from the beggar Lazarus, "full of sores," in Luke 16: 20).

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand  
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd: 75  
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
 Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled;  
 No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
 With all my imperfections on my head:  
 O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible! 80  
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;  
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.  
 But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,  
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive 85  
 Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven,  
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!  
 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire: 90  
 Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me. [Exit.]

HAMLET. O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?  
 And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart;  
 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,  
 But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee! 95  
 Aye, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee!  
 Yea, from the table of my memory  
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past, 100  
 That youth and observation copied there;  
 And thy commandment all alone shall live  
 Within the book and volume of my brain,  
 Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!  
 O most pernicious woman! 105  
 O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!  
 My tables,—meet it is I set it down,  
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;  
 At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark. [Writing.]  
 So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;  
 It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.' 110  
 I have sworn't.

HORATIO. }  
 MARCELLUS. } [Within] My lord, my lord!

[Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.]

MARCELLUS.

Lord Hamlet!

77. *Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled*: without sacrament, unprepared, without extreme unction.

97. *globe*: head.  
 98. *table*: writing tablet. The word is used in the same sense in l. 107.

HORATIO. Heaven secure him!

HAMLET. So be it!

MARCELLUS. Illo, ho, ho, my lord! 115

HAMLET. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.

MARCELLUS. How is't, my noble lord?

HORATIO. What news, my lord?

HAMLET. O, wonderful!

HORATIO. Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET. No; you will reveal it.

HORATIO. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

MARCELLUS. Nor I, my lord. 120

HAMLET. How say you, then; would heart of man once think it?  
But you'll be secret?

HORATIO. }  
MARCELLUS. } Aye, by heaven, my lord.

HAMLET. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark  
But he's an arrant knave.

HORATIO. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave 125  
To tell us this.

HAMLET. Why, right; you are i' the right;  
And so, without more circumstance at all,  
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:  
You, as your business and desire shall point you;  
For every man hath business and desire, 130  
Such as it is; and for my own poor part,  
Look you, I'll go pray.

HORATIO. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

HAMLET. I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;  
Yes, faith, heartily.

HORATIO. There's no offense, my lord. 135

HAMLET. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,  
And much offense too. Touching this vision here,  
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:  
For your desire to know what is between us,  
O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good friends, 140  
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,  
Give me one poor request.

HORATIO. What is't, my lord? we will.

HAMLET. Never make known what you have seen tonight.

MARCELLUS. }  
HORATIO. } My lord, we will not.

HAMLET. Nay, but swear't.

HORATIO. In faith,  
My lord, not I.

MARCELLUS. Nor I, my lord, in faith. 145

HAMLET. Upon my sword.

MARCELLUS. We have sworn, my lord, already.

HAMLET. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAMLET. Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there, true-penny?

Come on: you hear this fellow in the cellarage:

Consent to swear.

HORATIO. Propose the oath, my lord. 150

HAMLET. Never to speak of this that you have seen,

Swear by my sword.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAMLET. Hic et ubique? then we'll shift our ground.

Come hither, gentlemen, 155

And lay your hands again upon my sword:

Never to speak of this that you have heard,

Swear by my sword.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAMLET. Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth so fast? 160

A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.

HORATIO. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAMLET. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. 165

But come;

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,

How strange or odd so'er I bear myself,

As I perchance hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on, 170

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we would,'

Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an if they might,' 175

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me: this not to do,

So grace and mercy at your most need help you,

Swear.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear. 180

HAMLET. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! [*They swear.*]

So, gentlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you:

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is

148. *true-penny*: honest fellow.

154. *Hic et ubique*: here and every-  
where.

161. *pioner*: miner.

170. *antic*: odd, fantastic.

172. *encumber'd*: folded.



May do, to express his love and friending to you, 185  
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;  
 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.  
 The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,  
 That ever I was born to set it right!  
 Nay, come, let's go together. 190  
 [Exeunt.]

Act II

SCENE 1—A room in Polonius's house.

[Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO.]

POLONIUS. Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

REYNALDO. I will, my lord.

POLONIUS. You shall do marvelous wisely, good Reynaldo,  
 Before you visit him, to make inquire  
 Of his behavior.

REYNALDO. My lord, I did intend it. 5

POLONIUS. Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,

Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris,

And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,

What company, at what expense, and finding

By this encompassment and drift of question 10

That they do know my son, come you more nearer

Than your particular demands will touch it:

Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him,

As thus, 'I know his father and his friends,

And in part him:' do you mark this, Reynaldo? 15

REYNALDO. Aye, very well, my lord.

POLONIUS. 'And in part him; but,' you may say, 'not well:

But if 't be he I mean, he's very wild,

Addicted so and so;' and there put on him

What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank 20

As may dishonor him; take heed of that;

But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips

As are companions noted and most known

To youth and liberty.

REYNALDO. As gaming, my lord.

POLONIUS. Aye, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarreling, 25

Drabbing: you may go so far.

REYNALDO. My lord, that would dishonor him.

POLONIUS. Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.

You must not put another scandal on him,

7. *Danskers*: Danes.

8. *keep*: dwell.

10. *encompassment*: roundabout way.

*drift of question*: turn of your talk.

28. *season*: temper, qualify. *in the*

*charge*: in making the accusation.

That he is open to incontinency; 30  
 That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaintly  
 That they may seem the taints of liberty,  
 The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,  
 A savageness in unreclaimed blood,  
 Of general assault.

REYNALDO. But, my good lord,— 35

POLONIUS. Wherefore should you do this?

REYNALDO. Aye, my lord,

I would know that.

POLONIUS. Marry, sir, here's my drift,

And I believe it is a fetch of warrant:

You laying these slight sullices on my son,

As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working, 40

Mark you,

Your party in converse, him you would sound,

Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes

The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured

He closes with you in this consequence; 45

'Good sir,' or so, or 'friend,' or 'gentleman,'

According to the phrase or the addition

Of man and country.

REYNALDO. Very good, my lord. 48

POLONIUS. And then, sir, does he this—he does—what was I about  
 to say? By the mass, I was about to say something: where did I  
 leave?

REYNALDO. At 'closes in the consequence,' at 'friend or so,' and  
 'gentleman.'

POLONIUS. At 'closes in the consequence,' aye, marry; 49

He closes with you thus: 'I know the gentleman;

I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,

Or then, or then, with such, or such, and, as you say,

There was a' gaming, there o'ertook in 's rouse,

There falling out at tennis:' or perchance,

'I saw him enter such a house of sale,' 55

Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.

See you now;

Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:

31. *quaintly*: delicately, skillfully.

32. *taints*: stains, faults.

34. *unreclaimed*: untamed.

35. *of general assault*: dangers to  
 whose assault all are exposed.

38. *fetch*: stratagem. *of warrant*:  
 warrantable, justifiable.

42. *converse*: conversation.

43. *Having ever*: whether he has  
 ever. *prenominate*: aforementioned.

44–45. *be assured . . . consequence*:  
 you may be sure he will agree in this  
 conclusion.

47. *addition*: title.

53. *o'ertook in 's rouse*: intoxicated  
 in his reveling.

And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,  
 With windlasses and with assays of bias,  
 By indirections find directions out:  
 So, by my former lecture and advice,  
 Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

REYNALDO. My lord, I have.

POLONIUS. God be wi' ye; fare ye well.

REYNALDO. Good my lord!

POLONIUS. Observe his inclination in yourself.

REYNALDO. I shall, my lord.

POLONIUS. And let him ply his music.

REYNALDO. Well, my lord.

POLONIUS. Farewell! [Exit REYNALDO.]

[Enter OPHELIA.]

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

OPHELIA. O, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

POLONIUS. With what, i' the name of God?

OPHELIA. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
 Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,  
 No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,  
 Ungarter'd and down-gyved to his ankle;  
 Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,  
 And with a look so piteous in purport  
 As if he had been loosèd out of hell  
 To speak of horrors, he comes before me.

POLONIUS. Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA. My lord, I do not know,

But truly I do fear it.

POLONIUS. What said he?

OPHELIA. He took me by the wrist and held me hard;  
 Then goes he to the length of all his arm,  
 And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
 He falls to such perusal of my face  
 As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;  
 At last, a little shaking of mine arm,  
 And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
 He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
 As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
 And end his being: that done, he lets me go:  
 And with his head over his shoulder turn'd,

59. *of wisdom and of reach*: wise and farsighted.

60. *windlasses*: winding ways. *assays of bias*: sending the ball indirectly (in bowling).

66. *in yourself*: by yourself.

74. *doublet*: jacket.

76. *down-gyved*: pulled down like fetters.

The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

KING. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

50

POLONIUS. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;

My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

KING. Thysself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[Exit POLONIUS.]

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found

The head and source of all your son's distemper.

55

QUEEN. I doubt it is no other but the main;

His father's death and our o'erhasty marriage.

KING. Well, we shall sift him.

[Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.]

Welcome, my good friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

VOLTIMAND. Most fair return of greetings and desires.

60

Upon our first, he sent out to suppress

His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd

To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack,

But better look'd into, he truly found

It was against your highness: whereat grieved,

65

That so his sickness, age and impotence

Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests

On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys,

Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine

Makes vow before his uncle never more

70

To give the assay of arms against your majesty.

Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,

Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee

And his commission to employ those soldiers,

So levied as before, against the Polack:

75

With an entreaty, herein further shown,

[Giving a paper.]

That it might please you to give quiet pass

Through your dominions for this enterprise,

On such regards of safety and allowance

As therein are set down.

KING. It likes us well,

80

And at our more consider'd time we'll read,

Answer, and think upon this business.

Meantime we thank you for your well-took labor:

Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:

Most welcome home!

[Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.]

53. *grace*: honor.

59. *Norway*: the king of Norway.

61. *Upon our first*: as soon as we made the request.

67. *borne in hand*: deluded.

69. *in fine*: finally.

71. *assay*: test.

80. *likes*: pleases.

POLONIUS. This business is well ended. 85

My liege, and madam, to expostulate  
What majesty should be, what duty is,  
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,  
Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.  
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit 90  
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,  
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad:  
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,  
What is 't but to be nothing else but mad?  
But let that go.

QUEEN. More matter, with less art. 95

POLONIUS. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.

That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity,  
And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure;  
But farewell it, for I will use no art.

Mad let us grant him then: and now remains 100  
That we find out the cause of this effect,  
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,  
For this effect defective comes by cause:  
Thus it remains and the remainder thus.

Perpend. 105

I have a daughter,—have while she is mine,—  
Who in her duty and obedience, mark,  
Hath given me this: now gather and surmise. 108

[Reads.]

'To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,'—

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is a vile phrase;  
but you shall hear. Thus:

[Reads.]

'In her excellent white bosom, these,' &c.

QUEEN. Came this from Hamlet to her?

POLONIUS. Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

[Reads.]

'Doubt thou the stars are fire;  
Doubt that the sun doth move;  
Doubt truth to be a liar;  
But never doubt I love.

'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers;<sup>a</sup> I have not art to  
reckon my groans: but that I love thee best, O most best, believe  
it. Adieu.

'Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this

98. *figure*: of speech.

105. *Perpend*: consider.

a. verses.

machine is to him, HAMLET.'

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me; 109  
And more above, hath his solicitings,  
As they fell out by time, by means and place,  
All given to mine ear.

KING. But how hath she  
Received his love?

POLONIUS. What do you think of me?

KING. As of a man faithful and honorable.

POLONIUS. I would fain prove so. But what might you think, 115  
When I had seen this hot love on the wing,—  
As I perceived it, I must tell you that,  
Before my daughter told me,—what might you,  
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,  
If I had play'd the desk or table-book, 120  
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,  
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;  
What might you think? No, I went round to work,  
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:  
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star; 125  
This must not be:' and then I prescripts gave her,  
That she should lock herself from his resort,  
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.  
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;  
And he repulsed, a short tale to make, 130  
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,  
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,  
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension  
Into the madness wherein now he raves  
And all we mourn for. 135

KING. Do you think this?

QUEEN. It may be, very like.

POLONIUS. Hath there been such a time, I 'ld fain know that,  
That I have positively said ' 'tis so,'  
When it proved otherwise?

KING. Not that I know.

POLONIUS. [*Pointing to his head and shoulder*] Take this, from  
this, if this be otherwise: 140

If circumstances lead me, I will find  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed

110. *more above*: moreover.

120. *If I had . . . table-book*: if I had performed the function of a desk or a notebook (in keeping the matter secret).

121. *given my heart a winking*: shut

my heart's eye.

123. *round to work*: straight to work.

125. *star*: sphere.

132. *watch*: insomnia.

133. *lightness*: lightheadedness. *declension*: declining.

Within the center.

KING.

How may we try it further?

POLONIUS. You know, sometimes he walks for hours together  
Here in the lobby.

QUEEN.

So he does, indeed.

145

POLONIUS. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:

Be you and I behind an arras then;

Mark the encounter: if he love her not,

And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,

Lest me be no assistant for a state,

150

But keep a farm and carters.

KING.

We will try it.

QUEEN. But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

POLONIUS. Away, I do beseech you, both away:

I'll board him presently.

[Exeunt KING, QUEEN, and ATTENDANTS. —Enter HAMLET,  
reading.]

O, give me leave: how does my good Lord Hamlet?

155

HAMLET. Well, God-a-mercy.

POLONIUS. Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET. Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

POLONIUS. Not I, my lord.

HAMLET. Then I would you were so honest a man.

POLONIUS. Honest, my lord!

HAMLET. Aye, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man  
picked out of ten thousand.

POLONIUS. That's very true, my lord.

HAMLET. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good  
kissing<sup>b</sup> carrion— Have you a daughter?

POLONIUS. I have, my lord.

HAMLET. Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing; but  
as your daughter may conceive,—friend, look to 't.

POLONIUS. [Aside] How say you by that?<sup>c</sup> Still harping on my daughter:  
yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger: he  
is far gone: and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for  
love; very near this. I'll speak to him again.—What do you read,  
my lord?

HAMLET. Words, words, words.

POLONIUS. What is the matter,<sup>d</sup> my lord?

HAMLET. Between who?

143. center: of the earth.

149. thereon: for that reason.

154. board: approach.

b. good for kissing.

c. What do you say to that?

d. The word has several meanings. Polonius uses it to denote the subject matter of the book; but Hamlet responds, in the next line, as if he referred to the subject of a quarrel.

POLONIUS. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

HAMLET. Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

POLONIUS. [*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.—Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAMLET. Into my grave.

POLONIUS. Indeed, that's out of the air. [*Aside*]

How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honorable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

HAMLET. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal: except my life, except my life, except my life.

POLONIUS. Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET. These tedious old fools.

[*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

POLONIUS. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

ROSENCRANTZ [*To POLONIUS*] God save you, sir!

[*Exit POLONIUS.*]

GUILDENSTERN. My honored lord!

ROSENCRANTZ. My most dear lord!

HAMLET. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern?

Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do you both?

ROSENCRANTZ. As the indifferent<sup>a</sup> children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN. Happy, in that we are not over-happy;

On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.<sup>f</sup>

HAMLET. Nor the soles of her shoe?

ROSENCRANTZ. Neither, my lord.

HAMLET. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors?

GUILDENSTERN. Faith, her privates we.

HAMLET. In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What's the news?

ROSENCRANTZ. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

HAMLET. Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends,



deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN. Prison, my lord!

HAMLET. Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ. Then is the world one.

HAMLET. A goodly one; in which there are many confines,<sup>g</sup> wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

ROSENCRANTZ. We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET. Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

HAMLET. O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

GUILDENSTERN. Which dreams indeed are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

HAMLET. A dream itself is but a shadow.

ROSENCRANTZ. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

HAMLET. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows.<sup>h</sup> Shall we to the court? for, by my fay,<sup>i</sup> I cannot reason.

ROSENCRANTZ. } We'll wait upon you.  
GUILDENSTERN. }

HAMLET. No such matter: I will not sort you<sup>j</sup> with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ. To visit you, my lord: no other occasion.

HAMLET. Beggar that I am, I am even poor<sup>k</sup> in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny.<sup>k</sup> Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly<sup>l</sup> with me: come, come; nay, speak.

GUILDENSTERN. What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET. Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to color: I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ. To what end, my lord?

HAMLET. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the

<sup>g</sup>. places of confinement.

<sup>h</sup>. Then people without ambition (like beggars) are the really substantial ones, while monarchs and heroes are their outstretched shadows.

<sup>i</sup>. faith.

<sup>j</sup>. put you together.

<sup>k</sup>. if priced at a halfpenny.

<sup>l</sup>. honestly.

rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer<sup>m</sup> could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no.

ROSENCRANTZ. [*Aside to GUILDENSTERN*] What say you?

HAMLET. [*Aside*] Nay then, I have an eye of<sup>n</sup> you.—If you love me, hold not off.

GUILDENSTERN. My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery,<sup>o</sup> and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted<sup>p</sup> with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how expressed<sup>q</sup> and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

ROSENCRANTZ. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

HAMLET. Why did you laugh then, when I said 'man delights not me'?

ROSENCRANTZ. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment<sup>r</sup> the players shall receive from you: we coted<sup>s</sup> them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

HAMLET. He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous<sup>t</sup> man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere,<sup>u</sup> and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for 't. What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

HAMLET. How chances it they travel? their residence,<sup>v</sup> both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

*m.* speaker.

*n.* on.

*o.* precede your disclosure.

*p.* adorned.

*q.* perfect.

*r.* meagre reception.

*s.* overtook.

*t.* eccentric, whimsical.

*u.* ready to shoot off at a touch.

*v.* i.e., in the city.

ROSENCRANTZ. I think their inhibition<sup>w</sup> comes by means of the late innovation.<sup>x</sup>

HAMLET. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so followed?

ROSENCRANTZ. No, indeed, are they not.

HAMLET. How comes it? do they grow rusty?

ROSENCRANTZ. Nay, their endeavor keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, sir, an eyrie<sup>y</sup> of children, little cyases,<sup>z</sup> that cry out on the top of question<sup>a</sup> and are most tyrannically<sup>b</sup> clapped for 't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle<sup>c</sup> the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapier<sup>d</sup> are afraid of goose-quills,<sup>e</sup> and dare scarce come thither.

HAMLET. What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted?<sup>f</sup> Will they pursue the quality<sup>g</sup> no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players,—as it is most like, if their means are no better,—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?<sup>h</sup>

ROSENCRANTZ. Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tarre<sup>i</sup> them to controversy: there was for a while no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.<sup>j</sup>

HAMLET. Is 't possible?

GUILDENSTERN. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

HAMLET. Do the boys carry it away?<sup>k</sup>

ROSENCRANTZ. Aye, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.<sup>l</sup>

HAMLET. It is not very strange; for my uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows<sup>m</sup> at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats<sup>n</sup> a-piece, for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of trumpets within.*]

GUILDENSTERN. There are the players.

HAMLET. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and cere-

w. prohibition.

x. the introduction of "an eyrie of children," as Rosencrantz explains in his subsequent replies to Hamlet.

y. brood.

z. unfledged birds.

a. in the highest key.

b. vehemently.

c. berate.

d. many gentlemen.

e. afraid of pens (i.e., of poets satirizing the "common stages").

f. financially supported.

g. profession.

h. recite satiric pieces against what they are themselves likely to become, common players.

i. incite.

j. no offer to buy a plot for a play if it did not contain a quarrel between poet and player on that subject.

k. win out.

l. the sign in front of the Globe theater.

m. faces.

mony: let me comply with you in this garb,<sup>n</sup> lest my extent<sup>o</sup> to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outwards, should more appear like entertainment<sup>p</sup> than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

GUILDENSTERN. In what, my dear lord?

HAMLET. I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.<sup>q</sup>

[*Re-enter* POLONIUS.]

POLONIUS. Well be with you, gentlemen!

HAMLET. Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too: at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.<sup>r</sup>

ROSENCRANTZ. Happily he's the second time come to them: for they say an old man is twice a child.

HAMLET. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 'twas so, indeed.<sup>s</sup>

POLONIUS. My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAMLET. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

POLONIUS. The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAMLET. Buz, buz!<sup>t</sup>

POLONIUS. Upon my honor,—

HAMLET. Then came each actor on his ass,—

POLONIUS. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited:<sup>u</sup> Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty,<sup>v</sup> these are the only men.

HAMLET. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

POLONIUS. What a treasure had he, my lord?

HAMLET. Why,

'Onc fair daughter, and no more,  
The which he lovèd passing well.'<sup>w</sup>

POLONIUS. [*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

HAMLET. Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

POLONIUS. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

HAMLET. Nay, that follows not.

POLONIUS. What follows, then, my lord?

HAMLET. Why,

<sup>n</sup>. style.

<sup>o</sup>. behavior.

<sup>p</sup>. welcome.

<sup>q</sup>. heron.

<sup>r</sup>. clothes.

<sup>s</sup>. Hamlet, for Polonius' sake, pretends he is deep in talk with Rosen-  
crantz.

<sup>t</sup>. an expression used to stop the teller of a stale story.

<sup>u</sup>. *scene . . . unlimited*: plays which do, and plays which do not, observe the unities.

<sup>v</sup>. a possible meaning is, "For both written and extemporized plays."

<sup>w</sup>. from an old ballad.

'As by lot, God wot.'

and then you know,

'It came to pass, as most like it was,'—  
the first row of the pious chanson<sup>x</sup> will show you more; for look,  
where my abridgment<sup>y</sup> comes.

[Enter four or five PLAYERS.]

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend! Why thy face is valanced<sup>z</sup> since I saw thee last; comest thou to beard me in Denmark? What, my young lady and mistress! By'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.<sup>a</sup> Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent<sup>b</sup> gold, be not cracked within the ring.<sup>c</sup> Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to 't like French falconers,<sup>d</sup> fly at any thing we see: we'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

FIRST PLAYER. What speech, my good lord?

HAMLET. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general:<sup>e</sup> but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine<sup>f</sup>—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty<sup>g</sup> as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallots<sup>h</sup> in the lincs to make the matter savory, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affection;<sup>i</sup> but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome<sup>j</sup> than fine.<sup>k</sup> One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido;<sup>l</sup> and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's<sup>l</sup> slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see;

'The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian<sup>l</sup> beast,'—

156

It is not so: it begins with 'Pyrrhus.'

'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble  
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,

160

x. song.

y. i.e., the players interrupting him.

z. draped (i.e., bearded).

a. a shoe with a thick wooden sole, a clog.

b. unfit for currency.

c. a pun on the "ring" of the voice and the "ring" round the king's head on a coin.

d. known for their versatility in hunting.

e. a delicacy wasted on the general public.

f. were louder (more authoritative) than mine.

g. artistic restraint.

h. salads (i.e., relish, spiced passages).

i. affectation.

j. more elegant than showy.

k. the story of the fall of Troy, told by Æneas to queen Dido.

l. Priam was king of Troy.

156. *Pyrrhus*: Achilles' son (called also Neoptolemus). *Hyrcanian beast*: tiger.

158. *sable*: black.

160. *horse*: the wooden horse in which Greek warriors were smuggled into Troy.

Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd  
 With heraldry more dismal: head to foot  
 Now is he total gules; horribly trick'd  
 With the blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
 Baked and impasted with the parching streets, 165  
 That lend a tyrannous and a damned light  
 To their lord's murder: roasted in wrath and fire,  
 And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,  
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
 Old grandsire Priam seeks.' 170  
 So, proceed you.

POLONIUS. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

FIRST PLAYER. 'Anon he finds him  
 Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,  
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls, 175  
 Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,  
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;  
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
 The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top 180  
 Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' car: for, lo! his sword,  
 Which was declining on the milky head  
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:  
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood, 185  
 And like a neutral to his will and matter,  
 Did nothing.

But as we often see, against some storm,  
 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,  
 The bold winds speechless and the orb below 190  
 As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
 Doth rend the region, so after Pyrrhus' pause  
 Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;  
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
 On Mars's armor, forged for proof eterne, 195  
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
 Now falls on Priam.

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,  
 In general synod take away her power,  
 Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel, 200

163. *gules*: heraldic term for red.  
*trick'd*: adorned.

166. *tyrannous*: savage.

168. *o'er-sized*: glued over.

179. *Ilium*: Troy's citadel.

181. *his*: its.

188. *against*: just before.

189. *rack*: clouds.

194. *Cyclops*: the gigantic workmen of Hephaestus (Vulcan), god of black-smiths and fire.

200. *fellies*: rims.

And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven  
As low as to the fiends!'

202

POLONIUS. This is too long.

HAMLET. It shall to the barbier's, with your beard. Prithee, say on:  
he's for a jig<sup>m</sup> or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps: say on: come to  
Hecuba.

FIRST PLAYER. 'But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen—'

203

HAMLET. "The mobled queen?"

POLONIUS. That's good; 'mobled queen' is good.

205

FIRST PLAYER. 'Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames

With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head

Where late the diadem stood; and for a robe,

About her lank and all o'er-teemèd loins,

A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up:

210

Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd

'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced:

But if the gods themselves did see her then,

When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport

In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,

215

The instant burst of clamor that she made,

Unless things mortal move them not at all,

Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven

And passion in the gods.'

219

POLONIUS. Look, whether he has not turned his color and has tears  
in 's eyes. Prithee, no more.

HAMLET. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon.  
Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you  
hear, let them be well used, for they are the abstracts and brief  
chronicles of the time: after your death you were better have a  
bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

POLONIUS. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

HAMLET. God's bodykins,<sup>o</sup> man, much better: use every man after  
his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your  
own honor and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is  
in your bounty. Take them in.

POLONIUS. Come, sirs.

HAMLET. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow. [Exit  
POLONIUS with all the PLAYERS but the first.] Dost thou hear me,  
old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

FIRST PLAYER. Aye, my lord.

201. *nave*: hub.  
*m.* ludicrous song dialogue, short  
farce.

203. *mobled*: muffled.

207. *bisson rheum*: blinding mois-  
ture (tears). *clout*: cloth.

209. *o'er-teemèd*: worn out by child-

bearing.

212. *state*: government.

217. *them*: the gods.

218. *milch*: moist. *eyes of heaven*:  
the stars.

*n.* taken care of.

*o.* diminutive of "body."

HAMLET. We'll ha 't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in 't, could you not?

FIRST PLAYER. Aye, my lord.

HAMLET. Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [Exit FIRST PLAYER.] My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ. Good my lord!

HAMLET. Aye, so, God be wi' ye! [Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.] Now I am alone. 220

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

Is it not monstrous that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his own conceit

That from her working all his visage wann'd;

Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!

For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,

That he should weep for her? What would he do,

Had he the motive and the cue for passion

That I have? He would drown the stage with tears

And cleave the general air with horrid speech,

Make mad the guilty and appal the free,

Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed

The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,

Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,

And can say nothing; no, not for a king,

Upon whose property and most dear life

A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?

Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?

Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?

Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,

As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?

Ha!

'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be

But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall

224. *conceit*: imagination, conception of the rôle played.

225. *her*: his soul's.

227. *function*: bodily action.

229. *Hecuba*: queen of Troy, Priam's wife.

239. *muddy-mettled*: of poor metal (spirit, temper). *peak*: mope.

240. *John-a-dreams*: a dreamy, absent-minded character. *unpregnant of my cause*: not really conscious of my cause, unquicken'd by it.

243. *defeat*: undoing.



To make oppression bitter, or ere this  
 I should have fatted all the region kites  
 With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!  
 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
 O, vengeance! 255  
 Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,  
 That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,  
 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
 Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
 And fall a-cursing, like a very drab, 260  
 A scullion!  
 Fie upon 't! About, my brain! Hum, I have heard  
 That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,  
 Have by the very cunning of the scene  
 Been struck so to the soul that presently 265  
 They have proclaim'd their malefactions;  
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
 Play something like the murder of my father  
 Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks; 270  
 I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,  
 I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
 May be the devil; and the devil hath power  
 To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
 Out of my weakness and my melancholy, 275  
 As he is very potent with such spirits,  
 Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds  
 More relative than this. The play 's the thing  
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [Exit.]

Act III

SCENE 1—A room in the castle.

[Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and  
 GUILDENSTERN.]

KING. And can you, by no drift of circumstance,  
 Get from him why he puts on this confusion,  
 Grating so harshly all his days of quiet  
 With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

ROSENCRANTZ. He does confess he feels himself distracted, 5  
 But from what cause he will by no means speak.

GUILDENSTERN. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded;

254. *kindless*: unnatural.

261. *scullion*: the lowest servant.

262. *About* . . . !: to work!

265. *presently*: immediately.

271. *tent*: probe. *blench*: flinch.

278. *relative*: relevant, positive.

1. *drift of circumstance*: turn of  
 talk, or roundabout way.

But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,  
 When we would bring him on to some confession  
 Of his true state.

QUEEN. Did he receive you well? 10

ROSENCRANTZ. Most like a gentleman.

GUILDENSTERN. But with much forcing of his disposition.

ROSENCRANTZ. Niggard of question, but of our demands  
 Most free in his reply.

QUEEN. Did you assay him  
 To any pastime? 15

ROSENCRANTZ. Madam, it so fell out that certain players  
 We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him,  
 And there did seem in him a kind of joy  
 To hear of it: they are about the court,  
 And, as I think, they have already order 20  
 This night to play before him.

POLONIUS. 'Tis most true:  
 And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties  
 To hear and see the matter.

KING. With all my heart; and it doth much content me  
 To hear him so inclined. 25

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,  
 And drive his purpose on to these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

KING. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,  
 That he, as 'twere by accident, may here  
 Affront Ophelia: 30

Her father and myself, lawful espials,  
 Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,  
 We may of their encounter frankly judge,  
 And gather by him, as he is behaved, 35  
 If 't be the affliction of his love or no  
 That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN. I shall obey you:

And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish  
 That your good beauties be the happy cause  
 Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues 40  
 Will bring him to his wonted way again,  
 To both your honors.

OPHELIA. Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit QUEEN.*]

14. *assay*: try to attract him.  
 17. *o'er-raught*: overtook.  
 26. *edge*: incitement.  
 29. *closely*: privately.

31. *Affront*: confront.  
 32. *espials*: spies.  
 33. *bestow*: place.

POLONIUS. Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,  
 We will bestow ourselves. [To OPHELIA] Read on this book;  
 That show of such an exercise may color 45  
 Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,—  
 'Tis too much proved—that with devotion's visage  
 And pious action we do sugar o'er  
 The devil himself.

KING. [Aside] O, 'tis too true!  
 How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience! 50  
 The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,  
 Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
 Than is my deed to my most painted word:  
 O heavy burthen!

POLONIUS. I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord. 55  
 [Exeunt KING and POLONIUS. —Enter Hamlet.]

HAMLET. To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
 And by opposing end them. To die: to sleep; 60  
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
 The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
 That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
 To sleep: perchance to dream: aye, there's the rub; 65  
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
 Must give us pause: there's the respect  
 That makes calamity of so long life;  
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, 70  
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
 The insolence of office, and the spurns  
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
 When he himself might his quietus make 75  
 With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
 But that the dread of something after death,  
 The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
 No traveler returns, puzzles the will, 80

45. *color*: excuse. 69. *of so long life*: so long-lived.  
 63. *consummation*: final settlement. 71. *contumely*: scorn.  
 65. *the rub*: the impediment (a bowl- 75. *quietus*: settlement of accounts,  
 ing term). acquittance.  
 67. *have shuffled off this mortal coil*: 76. *bodkin*: poniard, dagger. *fardels*:  
 have rid ourselves of the turmoil of burdens.  
 68. *respect*: consideration. 79. *bourn*: boundary.

And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
 Than fly to others that we know not of?  
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
 And thus the native hue of resolution  
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment  
 With this regard their currents turn awry  
 And lose the name of action. Soft you now!  
 The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
 Be all my sins remember'd.

85

OPHELIA. Good my lord,  
 How does your honor for this many a day?

90

HAMLET. I humbly thank you: well, well, well.

OPHELIA. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,  
 That I have longed to re-deliver;  
 I pray you, now receive them.

HAMLET. No, not I;

95

I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA. My honor'd lord, you know right well you did;  
 And with them words of so sweet breath composed  
 As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,  
 Take these again; for to the noble mind  
 Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.  
 There, my lord.

101

HAMLET. Ha, ha! are you honest?

OPHELIA. My lord?

HAMLET. Are you fair?

OPHELIA. What means your lordship?

HAMLET. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit  
 no discourse to your beauty.

OPHELIA. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce<sup>a</sup> than with  
 honesty?

HAMLET. Aye, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform  
 honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can  
 translate beauty into his<sup>b</sup> likeness: this was sometime a paradox,  
 but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

OPHELIA. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET. You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so  
 inoculate<sup>c</sup> our old stock, but we shall relish of<sup>d</sup> it: I loved you not.

OPHELIA. I was the more deceived.

HAMLET. Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of  
 sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me  
 of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me:

86. *pitch*: height.

89. *orisons*: prayers.

a. intercourse.

b. its.

c. graft (in the botanical sense).

d. have a flavor of, smack of.

I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth! We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

OPHELIA. At home, my lord.

HAMLET. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in 's own house. Farewell.

OPHELIA. O, help him, you sweet heavens!

HAMLET. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters<sup>e</sup> you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

OPHELIA. O heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures,<sup>f</sup> and make your wantonness your ignorance.<sup>g</sup> Go to, I'll no more on 't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

[Exit.]

OPHELIA. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown! 102  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword:  
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form, 105  
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!  
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,  
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,  
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh; 110  
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth  
Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,  
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

[Re-enter KING and POLONIUS.]

KING. Love! his affections do not that way tend;  
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little, 115  
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul

<sup>e</sup> cuckolds bear imaginary horns, and "a horn'd man's a monster" (*Othello*, Act IV, Scene 1, l. 63).

<sup>f</sup> misname (out of affectation) the most natural things.

<sup>g</sup> pretend that that is due to igno-

rance instead of affectation.

105. *The glass . . . form*: the mirror of fashion and the model of behavior.

106. *of*: by.

112. *ecstasy*: madness.

O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,  
 And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose  
 Will be some danger: which for to prevent,  
 I have in quick determination 120

Thus set it down:—he shall with speed to England,  
 For the demand of our neglected tribute:  
 Haply the seas and countries different  
 With variable objects shall expel  
 This something-settled matter in his heart, 125  
 Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus  
 From fashion of himself. What think you on 't?

POLONIUS. It shall do well: but yet do I believe  
 The origin and commencement of his grief  
 Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia! 130  
 You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;  
 We heard it all. My lord, do as you please;  
 But, if you hold it fit, after the play,  
 Let his queen mother all alone entreat him  
 To show his grief: let her be round with him;  
 And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear 135  
 Of all their conference. If she find him not,  
 To England send him, or confine him where  
 Your wisdom best shall think.

KING. It shall be so:  
 Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. 140  
*[Exeunt.]*

SCENE 2—A hall in the castle.

*[Enter HAMLET and PLAYERS.]*

HAMLET. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you,  
 trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your  
 players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do  
 not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently:  
 for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of  
 your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may  
 give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious  
 periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split  
 the ears of the groundlings,<sup>a</sup> who, for the most part, are capable of  
 nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such  
 a fellow whipped for o'er doing Termagant;<sup>b</sup> it out-herods Herod:  
 pray you, avoid it.

118. *doubt*: fear.

125. *something*: somewhat.

126–127. *puts . . . himself*: makes  
 him behave unusually.

135. *round*: direct.

137. *find*: detect.

<sup>a</sup>. spectators in the pit, where ad-  
 mission was cheapest.

<sup>b</sup>. god of the Mohammedans in old  
 romances and morality plays. He was  
 portrayed as being noisy and ex-  
 citable.

FIRST PLAYER. I warrant your honor.

HAMLET. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty<sup>c</sup> of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature,<sup>d</sup> scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his<sup>e</sup> form and pressure.<sup>f</sup> Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theater of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely,<sup>g</sup> that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

FIRST PLAYER. I hope we have reformed that indifferently<sup>h</sup> with us, sir.

HAMLET. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them: for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren<sup>i</sup> spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

[*Exeunt* PLAYERS. —*Enter* POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.]

How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece of work?

POLONIUS. And the queen too, and that presently.

HAMLET. Bid the players make haste.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

Will you two help to hasten them?

ROSENCRANTZ. } We will, my lord.

GUILDENSTERN. }

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

HAMLET. What ho! Horatio!

[*Enter* HORATIO.]

HORATIO. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man

As e'er my conversation coped withal.

c. moderation.

d. form.

e. its.

f. impress, shape.

g. Hamlet refers apologetically to his following words, where he compares

the creation of men to the work of "journeymen," or laborers.

h. pretty well.

i. silly.

7. As . . . withal: as I ever associated with.

HORATIO. O, my dear lord,—

HAMLET. Nay, do not think I flatter;  
 For what advancement may I hope from thee,  
 That no revenue hast but thy good spirits, 10  
 To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?  
 No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,  
 And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee  
 Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?  
 Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice, 15  
 And could of men distinguish, her election  
 Hath seal'd thee for herself: for thou hast been  
 As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;  
 A man that fortune's buffets and rewards  
 Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those 20  
 Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled  
 That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger  
 To sound what stop she please. Give me that man  
 That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
 In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart, 25  
 As I do thee. Something too much of this.  
 There is a play to-night before the king;  
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
 Which I have told thee of my father's death:  
 I prithee, when thou sees that act a-foot, 30  
 Even with the very comment of thy soul  
 Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt  
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech  
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen,  
 And my imaginations are as foul 35  
 As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;  
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,  
 And after we will both our judgments join  
 In censure of his seeming.

HORATIO. Well, my lord:  
 If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing, 40  
 And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

HAMLET. They are coming to the play: I must be idle:  
 Get you a place. 43

[*Danish march. A flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS,*

13. *pregnant hinges*: supple joints.  
 14. *thrift . . . fawning*: material  
 profit may be derived from cringing.

21. *blood and judgment*: passion and  
 reason.

22-23. *for fortune's . . . please*: for  
 Fortune to put her finger on any

windhole she may please of the pipe.  
 31. *Even . . . soul*: with all your  
 powers of observation.

36. *stithy*: smithy.

39. *In censure of his seeming*: to  
 judge his behavior.

42. *idle*: crazy.



OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and other LORDS attendant, with the GUARD carrying torches.]

KING. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET. Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's<sup>j</sup> dish: I eat the air, promise-crammed: you cannot feed capons so.

KING. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.<sup>k</sup>

HAMLET. No, nor mine now. [To POLONIUS] My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?

POLONIUS. That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

HAMLET. What did you enact?

POLONIUS. I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

HAMLET. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready?

ROSENCRANTZ. Aye, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

QUEEN. Come hitther, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

POLONIUS. [To the KING] O, ho! do you mark that?

HAMLET. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[Lying down at OPHELIA's feet.]

OPHELIA. No, my lord.

HAMLET. I mean, my head upon your lap?

OPHELIA. Aye, my lord.

HAMLET. Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA. I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

OPHELIA. What is, my lord?

HAMLET. Nothing.

OPHELIA. You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET. Who, I?

OPHELIA. Aye, my lord.

HAMLET. O God, your only jig-maker.<sup>l</sup> What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within 's two hours.

OPHELIA. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET. So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables.<sup>m</sup> O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by 'r lady, he must build churches then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse,<sup>n</sup> whose

j. The chameleon was supposed to feed on air.

k. have nothing to do with my question.

l. maker of comic songs.

m. furs.

n. a figure in the old May-day games and morris dances.

epitaph is, 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.'

[*Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters. —Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck; lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner woos the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love. — Exeunt.*]

OPHELIA. What means this, my lord?

HAMLET. Marry, this is miching mallecho;<sup>o</sup> it means mischief.

OPHELIA. Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

[*Enter PROLOGUE.*]

HAMLET. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel;<sup>p</sup> they'll tell all.

OPHELIA. Will he tell us what this show meant?

HAMLET. Aye, or any show that you'll show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

OPHELIA. You are naught,<sup>q</sup> you are naught: I'll mark the play.

PROLOGUE. For us, and for our tragedy,  
Here stooping to your clemency,  
We beg your hearing patiently.

HAMLET. Is this a prologue, or the posy<sup>r</sup> of a ring?

OPHELIA. 'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET. As woman's love.

[*Enter two PLAYERS, KING and QUEEN.*]

PLAYER KING. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round 44  
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,  
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen  
About the world have times twelve thirties been,  
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands  
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

PLAYER QUEEN. So many journeys may the sun and moon 50  
Make us again count o'er ere love be donel  
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,  
So far from cheer and from your former state,  
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,

o. sneaking misdeed.

p. a secret.

q. naughty, improper.

r. motto, inscription.

44. *Phœbus' cart*: the chariot of the sun.

54. *I distrust you*: I am worried about you.

Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:  
For women's fear and love holds quantity,  
In neither aught, or in extremity.

Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know,  
And as my love is sized, my fear is so:  
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear,  
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

PLAYER KING. Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;  
My operant powers their functions leave to do:  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
Honor'd, beloved; and haply as one as kind  
For husband shalt thou—

PLAYER QUEEN. O, confound the rest!  
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:  
In second husband let me be accurst!  
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

HAMLET. [*Aside*] Wormwood, wormwood.

PLAYER QUEEN. The instances that second marriage move  
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love:  
A second time I kill my husband dead,  
When second husband kisses me in bed.

PLAYER KING. I do believe you think what now you speak,  
But what we do determine oft we break.  
Purpose is but the slave to memory,  
Of violent birth but poor validity:  
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,  
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.  
Most necessary 'tis that we forget  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:  
What to ourselves in passion we propose,  
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.  
The violence of either grief or joy  
Their own enactures with themselves destroy:  
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;  
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.  
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange  
That even our loves should with our fortunes change,  
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,  
Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.  
The great man down, you mark his favorite flies;  
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies:  
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;

56. *holds quantity*: maintain mutual balance.

63. *operant*: operative, vital. *leave*: cease.

71. *instances*: motives.

72. *respects of thrift*: considerations of material profit.

86. *enactures*: actual performances.

For who not needs shall never lack a friend,  
 And who in want a hollow friend doth try  
 Directly seasons him his enemy.  
 But, orderly to end where I begun,  
 Our wills and fates do so contrary run,  
 That our devices still are overthrown,  
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:  
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed,  
 But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

100

PLAYER QUEEN. Nor earth to me give food nor heaven light!  
 Sport and repose lock from me day and night!  
 To desperation turn my trust and hope!  
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!  
 Each opposit, that blanks the face of joy,  
 Meet what I would have well and it destroy!  
 Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,  
 If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

105

110

HAMLET. If she should break it now!

PLAYER KING. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here a while;  
 My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile  
 The tedious day with sleep.

115

[Sleeps.]

PLAYER QUEEN. Sleep rock thy brain;

And never come mischance between us twain! [Exit.]

HAMLET. Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

HAMLET. O, but she'll keep her word.

KING. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offense in 't?

HAMLET. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offense i' the world.

KING. What do you call the play?

HAMLET. The Mousc-trap. Marry, how? Tropically.<sup>†</sup> This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work; but what o' that? your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not: let the galled jade<sup>u</sup> wince, our withers<sup>v</sup> are unwrung.<sup>w</sup>

[Enter LUCIANUS.]

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

OPHELIA. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

HAMLET. I could interpret<sup>x</sup> between you and your love,<sup>y</sup> if I could

98. *seasons*: matures.

108. *anchor's cheer*: hermit's, or anchorite's, fare.

109. *blanks*: makes pale.

*s.* plot of the play in outline.

*t.* by a trope, figuratively.

*u.* injured horse.

*v.* the part between the shoulders of a horse.

*w.* not wrenched.

*x.* act as interpreter (regular feature in puppet shows).

*y.* lover.

see the puppets dallying.

OPHELIA. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

HAMLET. It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

OPHELIA. Still better and worse.

HAMLET. So you must take your husbands. Begin, murderer; pox,  
leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: the croaking raven  
doth bellow for revenge.

LUCIANUS. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agree-  
ing; 118

Confederate season, else no creature seeing;  
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected, 120  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
Thy natural magic and dire property,  
On wholesome life usurp immediately. 123

[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear.]

HAMLET. He poisons him i' the garden for his estate. His name's  
Gonzago: the story is extant, and written in very choice Italian:  
you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's  
wife.

OPHELIA. The king rises.

HAMLET. What, frightened with false fire!\*

QUEEN. How fares my lord?

POLONIUS. Give o'er the play.

KING. Give me some light. Away!

POLONIUS. Lights, lights, lights!

[Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.]

HAMLET. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalled play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep:

Thus runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers—if the rest of my  
fortunes turn Turk with me<sup>a</sup>—with two Provincial roses<sup>b</sup> on my  
razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry<sup>c</sup> of players, sir?

HORATIO. Half a share.

HAMLET. A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,

This realm dismantled was

Of Jove himself; and now reigns here

A very, very—pajock.<sup>d</sup>

HORATIO. You might have rhymed.<sup>e</sup>

119. *Confederate*: favorable.

121. *Hecate*: the goddess of witchcraft.

*z.* blank shot.

*a.* betray me (like a Christian turning Mohammedan).

*b.* forest of feathers . . . Provincial

*roses*: occasionally, parts of an actor's apparel.

*c.* company. The term is generally used with reference to a pack of hounds.

*d.* peacock.

*e.* "Ass" would have rhymed.

HAMLET. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

HORATIO. Very well, my lord.

HAMLET. Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO. I did very well note him.

HAMLET. Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the recorders!<sup>f</sup>

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music!

[*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

GUILDENSTERN. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAMLET. Sir, a whole history.

GUILDENSTERN. The king, sir,—

HAMLET. Aye, sir, what of him?

GUILDENSTERN. Is in his retirement marvelous distempered.

HAMLET. With drink, sir?

GUILDENSTERN. No, my lord, rather with choler.<sup>g</sup>

HAMLET. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to the doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

GUILDENSTERN. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

HAMLET. I am tame, sir: pronounce.

GUILDENSTERN. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

HAMLET. You are welcome.

GUILDENSTERN. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome<sup>h</sup> answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

HAMLET. Sir, I cannot.

GUILDENSTERN. What, my lord?

HAMLET. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say,—

ROSENCRANTZ. Then thus she says; your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.<sup>i</sup>

HAMLET. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

ROSENCRANTZ. She desires to speak with you in her closet,<sup>j</sup> ere you go to bed.

<sup>f</sup>. The recorder, an end-blown flute with eight holes, was popular during the late Renaissance.

<sup>g</sup>. bile, anger. An excess of bile was traditionally supposed to cause irasci-

bility.

<sup>h</sup>. sensible.

<sup>i</sup>. confusion and surprise.

<sup>j</sup>. private room.

HAMLET. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

ROSENCRANTZ. My lord, you once did love me.

HAMLET. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.<sup>k</sup>

ROSENCRANTZ. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do surely bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

HAMLET. Sir, I lack advancement.<sup>l</sup>

ROSENCRANTZ. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

HAMLET. Aye, sir, but 'while the grass grows,'<sup>m</sup>—the proverb is something musty.

[*Re-enter PLAYERS with recorders.*]

O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw<sup>n</sup> with you:—why do you go about to recover the wind of me,<sup>o</sup> as if you would drive me into a toil?<sup>p</sup>

GUILDENSTERN. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

HAMLET. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

GUILDENSTERN. My lord, I cannot.

HAMLET. I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN. Believe me, I cannot.

HAMLET. I do beseech you.

GUILDENSTERN. I know no touch of it, my lord.

HAMLET. It is as easy as lying: govern these ventages<sup>q</sup> with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

GUILDENSTERN. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

HAMLET. Why, look you now, how unworthy<sup>r</sup> a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret<sup>s</sup> me, yet you cannot play upon me.

[*Re-enter POLONIUS.*]

God bless you, sir!

<sup>k</sup>. the hands.

<sup>l</sup>. Hamlet pretends that the cause of his "distemper" is frustrated ambition.

<sup>m</sup>. The proverb ends, "oft starves the silly steed."

<sup>n</sup>. retire (talk in private).

<sup>o</sup>. get to windward of me.

<sup>p</sup>. snare.

<sup>q</sup>. windholes.

<sup>r</sup>. vex, with a pun on "frets" meaning the small ridges placed across the length of a guitar's finger board to regulate the fingering.

POLONIUS. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

HAMLET. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

POLONIUS. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

HAMLET. Methinks it is like a weasel.

POLONIUS. It is backed like a weasel.

HAMLET. Or like a whale?

POLONIUS. Very like a whale.

HAMLET. Then I will come to my mother by and by. They fool me to the top of my bent.<sup>a</sup> I will come by and by.

POLONIUS. I will say so.

[Exit POLONIUS.]

HAMLET. 'By and by' is easily said. Leave me, friends.

[Exeunt all but HAMLET.]

'Tis now the very witching time of night,

124

When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out

Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,

And do such bitter business as the day

Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.

O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever

The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:

130

Let me be cruel, not unnatural:

I will speak daggers to her, but use none;

My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;

How in my words soever she be shent,

To give them seals never, my soul, consent!

135

[Exit.]

### SCENE 3—A room in the castle.

[Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.]

KING. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us

To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you;

I your commission will forthwith dispatch,

And he to England shall along with you:

The terms of our estate may not endure

5

Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow

Out of his lunacies.

GUILDENSTERN.

We will ourselves provide:

Most holy and religious fear it is

To keep those many many bodies safe

That live and feed upon your majesty.

10

ROSENCRANTZ. The single and peculiar life is bound

With all the strength and armor of the mind

a. straining, tension (as of a bow).

130. *Nero*: This Roman emperor was the murderer of his mother.

134. *shent*: reproached.

135. *give them seals*: ratify them by action.

5. *The terms of our estate*: my position as king.

11. *peculiar*: individual.



To keep itself from noyance; but much more  
 That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests  
 The lives of many. The cease of majesty 16  
 Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw  
 What 's near it with it; it is a massy wheel,  
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,  
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things  
 Are mortised and adjoin'd; which, when it falls, 20  
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,  
 Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone  
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.  
 KING. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage,  
 For we will fetters put about this fear, 25  
 Which now goes too free-footed.

ROSENCRANTZ. } We will haste us.  
 GUILDENSTERN. }

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN. —*Enter* POLO-  
 NIUS.]

POLONIUS. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:  
 Behind the arras I'll convey myself,  
 To hear the process: I'll warrant she'll tax him home:  
 And, as you said, and wisely was it said, 30  
 'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,  
 Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear  
 The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege:  
 I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,  
 And tell you what I know.  
 KING. Thanks, dear my lord. 35

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven;  
 It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,  
 A brother's murder. Pray can I not,  
 Though inclination be as sharp as will:  
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent, 40  
 And like a man to double business bound,  
 I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
 And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,  
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens 45  
 To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy  
 But to confront the visage of offense?  
 And what's in prayer but this twofold force,

15. *cease*: de cease, extinction.  
 20. *mortised*: fastened.  
 29. *tax him home*: take him to task thoroughly.  
 33. *of vantage*: from a vantage point.  
 37. *the primal eldest curse*: Cain's.  
 47. *offense*: guilt.

To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
 Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;  
 My fault is past. But O, what form of prayer  
 Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder?'  
 That cannot be, since I am still possess'd  
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,  
 My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.  
 May one be pardon'd and retain the offense?  
 In the corrupted currents of this world  
 Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
 Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;  
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
 In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd  
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults  
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?  
 Try what repentance can: what can it not?  
 Yet what can it when one can not repent?  
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
 O limed soul, that struggling to be free  
 Art more engaged! Help, angels! make assay!  
 Bow, stubborn knees, and, heart with strings of steel,  
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!  
 All may be well.

[Retires and kneels. —Enter HAMLET.]

HAMLET. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;  
 And now I'll do 't: and so he goes to heaven:  
 And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd;  
 A villain kills my father; and for that,  
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
 To heaven.  
 O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.  
 He took my father grossly, full of bread,  
 With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;  
 And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?  
 But in our circumstance and course of thought,  
 'Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged,  
 To take him in the purging of his soul,  
 When he is fit and season'd for his passage?

56. *offense*: the things obtained through the offense.

59–60. *the wicked . . . law*: the wealth unduly acquired is used for bribery.

62. *his*: its.

64. *what rests*? what remains?

68. *limed*: caught as with birdlime.

69. *make assay*/: make the attempt: (addressed by the King to himself).

73. *pat*: conveniently.

75. *would be scann'd*: would have to be considered carefully.

81. *broad blown*: in full bloom.

*flush*: vigorous.

82. *audit*: account.

86. *season'd*: ripe, ready.

No.

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent:

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,

Or, in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;

90

At game, a-swearing, or about some act

That has no relish of salvation in 't;

Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven

And that his soul may be as damn'd and black

As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:

95

This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

[Exit.]

KING. [Rising] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:

Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

[Exit.]

SCENE 4—The Queen's closet.

[Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS.]

POLONIUS. He will come straight. Look you lay home to him:

Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,

And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between

Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.

Pray you, be round with him.

HAMLET. [Within]

Mother, mother, mother!

5

QUEEN. I'll warrant you; fear me not. Withdraw,

I hear him coming.

[POLONIUS hides behind the arras. —Enter HAMLET.]

HAMLET. Now, mother, what's the matter?

QUEEN. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET. Mother, you have my father much offended.

10

QUEEN. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN. Why, how now, Hamlet!

HAMLET.

What's the matter now?

QUEEN. Have you forgot me?

HAMLET.

No, by the rood, not so:

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;

15

And—would it were not so!—you are my mother.

QUEEN. Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

HAMLET. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;

You go not till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

20

QUEEN. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?

Help, help, ho!

POLONIUS. [Behind] What, ho! help, help, help!

88. *hent*: grip.

1. *straight*: straightway. *lay home*:  
give him a stern lesson.

2. *broad*: unrestrained.

5. *round*: straightforward.

14. *rood*: cross.

19. *glass*: mirror.

HAMLET. [*Drawing*] How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!

[*Makes a pass through the arras.*]

POLONIUS. [*Behind*] O, I am slain! [*Falls and dies.*]

QUEEN. O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET. Nay, I know not: is it the king? 25

QUEEN. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET. A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,

As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

QUEEN. As kill a king!

HAMLET. Aye, lady, 'twas my word.

[*Lifts up the arras and discovers POLONIUS.*]

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell! 30

I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;

Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.

Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,

And let me wring your heart: for so I shall, 35

If it be made of penetrable stuff;

If damned custom have not brass'd it so,

That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

QUEEN. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue

In noise so rude against me?

HAMLET. Such an act

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty, 40

Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose

From the fair forehead of an innocent love,

And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows

As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed

As from the body of contraction plucks 45

The very soul, and sweet religion makes

A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow;

Yea, this solidity and compound mass,

With tristful visage, as against the doom,

Is thought-sick at the act. 50

QUEEN. Aye me, what act,

That roars so loud and thunders in the index?

HAMLET. Look here, upon this picture, and on this,

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.

See what a grace was seated on this brow; 55

Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,

An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;

A station like the herald Mercury

32. *too busy*: too much of a busy-body.

37. *sense*: feeling.

45. *contraction*: duty to the marriage contract.

47. *glow*: blush with shame.

49. *tristful*: sad, against the doom: nearing doomsday.

52. *index*: prologue, table of contents.

54. *counterfeit presentment*: portrait.

58. *station*: posture.

New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;  
 A combination and a form indeed, 60  
 Where every god did seem to set his seal  
 To give the world assurance of a man:  
 This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:  
 Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,  
 Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes? 65  
 Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
 And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?  
 You cannot call it love, for at your age  
 The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
 And waits upon the judgment: and what judgment 70  
 Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,  
 Else could you not have motion: but sure that sense  
 Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err,  
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd  
 But it reserved some quantity of choice, 75  
 To serve in such a difference. What devil was 't  
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?  
 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,  
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense 80  
 Could not so mope.  
 O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,  
 If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax  
 And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame 85  
 When the compulsive ardor gives the charge,  
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,  
 And reason panders will.

QUEEN. O Hamlet, speak no more:

Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,  
 And there I see such black and grain'd spots  
 As will not leave their tinct.

HAMLET. Nay, but to live  
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,  
 Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love  
 Over the nasty sty,—

QUEEN. O, speak to me no more;

64. *ear*: ear of corn.

65. *his*: its.

66. *leave*: cease.

67. *batten*: gorge, fatten.

70. *waits upon*: is subordinated to.

71. *Sense*: sensibility, feeling.

73. *apoplex'd*: struck by apoplexy.

74. *ecstasy*: madness.

77. *cozen'd*: tricked. *hoodman-blind*: blindman's buff.

79. *sans*: without.

81. *mope*: be stupid.

86. *gives the charge*: attacks.

88. *panders*: becomes subservient to.

90. *grain'd*: dyed in.

91. *leave their tinct*: lose their color.

92. *enseamed*: greasy.

These words like daggers enter in my ears;  
No more, sweet Hamlet! 95

HAMLET. A murderer and a villain;  
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe  
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;  
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,  
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole 100  
And put it in his pocket!

QUEEN. No more!

HAMLET. A king of shreds and patches—

[Enter GHOST.]

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,  
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?

QUEEN. Alas, he's mad! 105

HAMLET. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,  
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by  
The important acting of your dread command?  
O, say!

GHOST. Do not forget: this visitation 110  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
But look, amazement on thy mother sits:  
O, step between her and her fighting soul:  
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works:  
Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAMLET. How is it with you, lady? 115

QUEEN. Alas, how is 't with you,  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy  
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?  
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;  
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm, 120  
Your bedded hairs, like life in excrements,  
Start up and stand an end. O gentle son,  
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper  
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

HAMLET. On him, on him! Look you how pale he glares!  
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,  
Would make them capable. Do not look upon me,  
Lest with this piteous action you convert  
My stern effects: then what I have to do  
Will want true color; tears perchance for blood. 130

97. *tithe*: tenth.

98. *vice*: clown (from the custom in the old morality plays of having a buffoon take the part of Vice, or of a particular vice).

99. *cutpurse*: pickpocket.

114. *Conceit*: imagination.

120. *alarm*: call to arms.

121. *excrements*: outgrowths.

122. *an end*: on end.

127. *capable*: capable of feeling.

128–129. *you convert . . . effects*: you make me change my purpose.

130. *for*: instead of.

QUEEN. To whom do you speak this?

HAMLET.

Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

HAMLET. Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN.

No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!

My father, in his habit as he lived!

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

135

[Exit GHOST.]

QUEEN. This is the very coinage of your brain:

This bodiless creation ecstasy

Is very cunning in.

HAMLET.

Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,

140

And makes as healthful music: it is not madness

That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,

And I the matter will re-word, which madness

Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,

Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,

145

That not your trespass but my madness speaks:

It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,

Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,

Infects unsecn. Confess yourself to heaven;

Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,

150

And do not spread the compost on the weeds,

To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,

For in the fatness of these pury times

Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,

Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

155

QUEEN. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

HAMLET. O, throw away the worser part of it,

And live the purer with the other half.

Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed;

Assume a virtue, if you have it not.

160

That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,

Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,

That to the use of actions fair and good

He likewise gives a frock or livery,

That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,

165

And that shall lend a kind of easiness

To the next abstinence; the next more easy;

For use almost can change the stamp of nature,

138. *ecstasy*: madness.

145. *unction*: ointment.

153. *pury*: swollen from pampering.

155. *curb*: bow.

165. *apty*: easily.

168. *use*: habit. *stamp*: cast, form.

And either curb the devil, or throw him out  
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night:

170

And when you are desirous to be blest,  
I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,  
[Pointing to POLONIUS.]

I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,  
To punish me with this, and this with me,  
That I must be their scourge and minister.  
I will bestow him, and will answer well  
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.  
I must be cruel, only to be kind:  
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.  
One word more, good lady.

175

QUEEN. What shall I do?

180

HAMLET. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:

Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;  
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse;  
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,  
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,  
Make you to ravel all this matter out,  
That I essentially am not in madness,  
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know;  
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,  
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,  
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?  
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,  
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,  
Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,  
To try conclusions, in the basket creep  
And break your own neck down.

185

190

195

QUEEN. Be thou assured, if words be made of breath  
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe  
What thou hast said to me.

HAMLET. I must to England; you know that?

QUEEN. Alack,

200

I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

HAMLET. There's letters seal'd: and my two schoolfellows,  
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,  
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,

175. *scourge and minister*: agent of punishment.

176. *bestow*: stow away.

182. *bloat*: bloated with drink.

184. *reechy*: fetid.

188. *craft*: simulation.

190. *paddock*: toad. *gib*: tomcat.

191. *dear concernings*: matters with

which one is closely concerned.

194. *the famous ape*: the ape in the unidentified animal fable to which Hamlet alludes; apparently the animal saw birds fly out of a basket and drew the conclusion that by placing himself in the basket he could fly too.

203. *fang'd*: with fangs.



And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;  
 For 'tis the sport to have the enginer 205  
 Hoist with his own petar: and 't shall go hard  
 But I will delve one yard below their mincs,  
 And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet  
 When in one line two crafts directly meet. 210  
 This man shall set me packing:  
 I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.  
 Mother, good night. Indeed this counselor  
 Is now most still, most secret and most grave,  
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave. 215  
 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.  
 Good night, mother.  
 [Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS.]

Act IV

SCENE 1—A room in the castle.

[Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.]  
 KING. There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves:  
 You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them.  
 Where is your son?  
 QUEEN. Bestow this place on us a little while.  
 [Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]  
 Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night! 5  
 KING. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?  
 QUEEN. Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend  
 Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,  
 Behind the arras hearing something stir,  
 Whips out his rapier, cries 'A rat, a rat!' 10  
 And in this brainish apprehension kills  
 The unseen good old man.  
 KING. O heavy deed!  
 It had been so with us, had we been there:  
 His liberty is full of threats to all,  
 To you yourself, to us, to every one. 15  
 Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?  
 It will be laid to us, whose providence  
 Should have kept short, restrain'd and out of haunt,  
 This mad young man: but so much was our love,  
 We would not understand what was most fit, 20  
 205. *marshal*: lead.  
 206. *enginer*: military engineer.  
 207. *Hoist*: blow up. *petar*: petard, a  
 variety of bomb.  
 214. *grave*: Hamlet is punning on  
 the word.  
 4. *Bestow this place on us*: leave us  
 alone.  
 11. *brainish apprehension*: imaginary  
 notion.  
 18. *short*: under close watch.

But, like the owner of a foul disease,  
To keep it from divulging, let it feed  
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

QUEEN. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:  
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore  
Among a mineral of metals base,  
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

25

KING. O Gertrude, come away!

The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,  
But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed  
We must, with all our majesty and skill,  
Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

30

[*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:  
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,  
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:  
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body  
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

35

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;  
And let them know, both what we mean to do,  
And what's untimely done. . . .

40

Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter  
As level as the cannon to his blank  
Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name  
And hit the woundless air. O, come away!  
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2—*Another room in the castle.*

[*Enter HAMLET.*]

HAMLET. Safely stowed.

ROSENCRANTZ. } [*Within*] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!  
GUILDENSTERN. }

HAMLET. But soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet?

O, here they come.

[*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

ROSENCRANTZ. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

HAMLET. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

6

ROSENCRANTZ. Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence  
And bear it to the chapel.

HAMLET. Do not believe it.

ROSENCRANTZ. Believe what?

10

HAMLET. That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides,

25. ore: gold.

32. countenance: recognize.

42. his blank: his target.

6. compounded: mixed.

to be demanded<sup>a</sup> of a sponge! what replication<sup>b</sup> should be made by the son of a king?

ROSENCRANTZ. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

HAMLET. Aye, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance,<sup>c</sup> his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and sponge, you shall be dry again.

ROSENCRANTZ. I understand you not, my lord.

HAMLET. I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

ROSENCRANTZ. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

HAMLET. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—

GUILDENSTERN. A thing, my lord?

HAMLET. Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.<sup>d</sup>

[Exeunt.]

Scene 3—Another room in the castle.

[Enter KING, attended.]

KING. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.

How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!

Yet must not we put the strong law on him:

He's loved of the distracted multitude,

Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;

And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,

But never the offense. To bear all smooth and even,

This sudden sending away must seem:

Deliberate pause: diseases desperate grown

By desperate appliance are relieved,

Or not at all.

[Enter ROSENCRANTZ.]

How now! what hath befall'n?

ROSENCRANTZ. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,

We cannot get from him.

KING.

But where is he?

ROSENCRANTZ. Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

KING. Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

[Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.]

a. questioned by.

b. formal reply.

c. favor.

d. the name of some children's game.

6. scourge: punishment.

7. bear: conduct.

9. Deliberate pause: the result of careful arrangement.

10. appliance: treatment.

KING. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET. At supper.

KING. At supper! where?

HAMLET. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of public worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet:<sup>a</sup> we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service,<sup>b</sup> two dishes, but to one table: that's the end.

KING. Alas, alas!

HAMLET. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

KING. What dost thou mean by this?

HAMLET. Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress<sup>c</sup> through the guts of a beggar.

KING. Where is Polonius?

HAMLET. In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose<sup>d</sup> him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

KING. Go seek him there. [To some ATTENDANTS.]

HAMLET. He will stay till you come. [Exeunt ATTENDANTS.]

KING. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,  
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve  
For that which thou hast done, must send thee hence  
With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;  
The bark is ready and the wind at help,  
The associates tend, and every thing is bent  
For England. 14

HAMLET. For England?

KING. Aye, Hamlet.

HAMLET. Good. 20

KING. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

HAMLET. I see a cherub that sees them. But, come; for England! Farewell, dear mother.

KING. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET. My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh, and so, my mother. Come, for England!

[Exit.]

KING. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;  
Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:  
Away! for every thing is seal'd and done 21

<sup>a</sup>. possibly a punning reference to the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire at Worms.

<sup>b</sup>. i.e., the service varies, not the food.

<sup>c</sup>. royal state journey.

<sup>d</sup>. smell.

15. *tender*: care for.

21. *at foot*: at his heels.

That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught—

As my great power thereof may give thee sense,

Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red

After the Danish sword, and thy free awe

Pays homage to us—thou mayst not coldly set

Our sovereign process; which imports at full,

By letters conjuring to that effect,

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;

For like the hectic in my blood he rages,

And thou must cure me; till I know 'tis done,

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE 4—A plain in Denmark.

[*Enter FORTINBRAS, a CAPTAIN and SOLDIERS, marching.*]

FORTINBRAS. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;

Tell him that by his license Fortinbras

Craves the conveyance of a promised march

Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.

If that his majesty would aught with us,

We shall express our duty in his eye;

And let him know so.

CAPTAIN.

I will do 't, my lord.

FORTINBRAS. Go softly on.

[*Exeunt FORTINBRAS and SOLDIERS.—Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others.*]

HAMLET. Good sir, whose powers are these?

CAPTAIN. They are of Norway, sir.

HAMLET. How purposed, sir, I pray you?

CAPTAIN. Against some part of Poland.

HAMLET. Who commands them, sir?

CAPTAIN. The nephew to Old Norway, Fortinbras.

HAMLET. Gocs it against the main of Poland, sir,

Or for some frontier?

CAPTAIN. Truly to speak, and with no addition,

We go to gain a little patch of ground

That hath in it no profit but the name.

To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;

Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole

24. *leans on*: pertains to.

25. *England*: the king of England.

26. *give thee sense*: make you feel.

29. *coldly set*: regard with indifference.

31. *conjuring*: enjoining.

33. *hectic*: fever.

3. *conveyance*: convoy.

6. *eye*: presence.

9. *powers*: armed forces.

15. *the main*: the whole of.

A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

HAMLET Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

CAPTAIN. Yes, it is already garrison'd.

HAMLET. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats 25

Will not debate the question of this straw:

This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,

That inward breaks, and shows no cause without

Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

CAPTAIN. God be wi' you, sir. [Exit.]

ROSENCRANTZ. Will 't please you go, my lord? 30

HAMLET. I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.

[Exeunt all but HAMLET.]

How all occasions do inform against me,

And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,

If his chief good and market of his time

Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more. 35

Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,

Looking before and after, gave us not

That capability and god-like reason

To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be

Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple 40

Of thinking too precisely on the event,—

A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom

And ever three parts coward,—I do not know

Why yet I live to say 'this thing's to do,'

Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means, 45

To do 't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:

Witness this army, of such mass and charge,

Led by a delicate and tender prince,

Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd

Makes mouths at the invisible event, 50

Exposing what is mortal and unsure

To all that fortune, death and danger dare,

Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great

Is not to stir without great argument,

But greatly to find quarrel in a straw 55

When honor's at the stake. How stand I then,

That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,

Excitements of my reason and my blood,

And let all sleep, while to my shame I see

22. *ranker*: higher. *in fee*: for absolute possession.

27. *imposthume*: ulcer.

32. *inform against*: denounce.

34. *market*: payment for, reward.

36. *discourse*: reasoning power.

39. *fust*: become moldy, taste of the

cask.

41. *event*: outcome.

45. *Sith*: since.

46. *gross*: large.

47. *charge*: cost.

50. *Makes mouths*: makes faces.

*event*: outcome.

The imminent death of twenty thousand men,  
That for a fantasy and trick of fame  
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,  
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

65  
[Exit.]

SCENE 5—*Elsinore. A room in the castle.*

[Enter QUEEN, HORATIO, and a GENTLEMAN.]

QUEEN. I will not speak with her.

GENTLEMAN. She is importunate, indeed distract:

Her mood will needs be pitied.

QUEEN.

What would she have?

GENTLEMAN. She speaks much of her father, says she hears

There's tricks i' the world, and hems and beats her heart,

Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,

That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,

Yet the unshapèd use of it doth move

The hearers to collection; they aim at it,

And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;

Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,

Indeed would make one think there might be thought,

Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

HORATIO. 'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

QUEEN. Let her come in.

[Exit GENTLEMAN.]

[Aside] To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,

Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:

So full of artless jealousy is guilt,

It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

[Re-enter GENTLEMAN, with OPHELIA.]

OPHELIA. Where is the beautiful majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN. How now, Ophelia!

OPHELIA. [Sings] How should I your true love know

From another one?

By his cockle hat and staff

And his sandal shoon.

61. *trick of*: trifle of.

63. *Whereon . . . cause*: so small that it cannot hold the men who fight for it.

64. *continent*: container.

6. *Spurns . . . straws*: gets angry at trifles.

9. *collection*: gathering up her words and trying to make sense out of them.  
*aim*: guess.

10. *botch*: patch.

15. *ill-breeding minds*: minds breeding evil thoughts.

18. *toy*: trifle. *amiss*: misfortune.

19. *artless*: uncontrolled, unreasonable. *jealousy*: suspicion.

25-26. *cockle hat . . . shoon*: typical signs of pilgrims traveling to places of devotion.

26. *shoon*: shoes.

QUEEN. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

[Sings] He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone;

30

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

Oh, oh!

QUEEN. Nay, but Ophelia,—

OPHELIA. Pray you, mark.

[Sings] White his shroud as the mountain snow,—

35

[Enter KING.]

QUEEN. Alas, look here, my lord.

OPHELIA. [Sings] Larded with sweet flowers;

Which bewept to the grave did go

With true-love showers.

39

KING. How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA. Well, God 'ild you!<sup>a</sup> They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be.<sup>b</sup> God be at your table!

KING. Conceit<sup>c</sup> upon her father.

OPHELIA. Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

[Sings] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day

40

All in the morning betime,

And I a maid at your window,

To be your Valentine.

Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,

And dupp'd the chamber-door;

45

Let in the maid, that out a maid

Never departed more.

KING. Pretty Ophelia!

OPHELIA. Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on 't:

[Sings] By Gis and by Saint Charity,

50

Alack, and fie for shame!

Young men will do 't, if they come to 't;

By cock, they are to blame.

Quoth she, before you tumbled me,

You promised me to wed.

55

He answers:

So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,

An thou hadst not come to my bed.

58

37. *larded*: garnished.

a. God yield (i.e., repay) you.

b. an allusion to a folk tale about a baker's daughter changed into an owl

for having shown little charity to the Lord.

c. imagination.

45. *dupp'd*: opened.

50. *By Gis*: by Jesus.



KING. How long hath she been thus?

OPHELIA. I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night.

[Exit.]

KING. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you.

[Exit HORATIO.]

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs  
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,  
When sorrows come, they come not single spics,  
But in battalions! First, her father slain:  
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author  
Of his own just remove: the people muddied,  
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,  
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,  
In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia  
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,  
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:  
Last, and as much containing as all these,  
Her brother is in secret come from France,  
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,  
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear  
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;  
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,  
Will nothing stick our person to arraign  
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,  
Like to a murdering-piece, in many places  
Gives me superfluous death. [A noise within.]

QUEEN. Alack, what noise is this?

KING. Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

[Enter another GENTLEMAN.]

What is the matter?

GENTLEMAN. Save yourself, my lord:

The ocean, overpeering of his list,  
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste  
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,

64. *muddied*: confused, their thoughts made turbid (as water by mud).

66. *greenly*: foolishly.

67. *hugger-mugger*: hasty secrecy.

72. *Feeds on his wonder*: broods, keeps wondering.

73. *wants*: lacks.

75. *necessity . . . beggar'd*: the necessity to build up a story, without the materials for doing so.

76. *Will . . . arraign*: will not hesitate to accuse me.

78. *murdering-piece*: a variety of cannon which scattered its shot in many directions.

80. *Switzers*: Swiss guards.

82. *overpeering of his list*: overflowing above the high-water mark.

84. *head*: group of rebels.

O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord; 85

And, as the world were now but to begin,

Antiquity forgot, custom not known,

The ratifiers and props of every word,

They cry 'Choose we; Laertes shall be king!'

Caps, hands and tongues applaud it to the clouds, 90

'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!'

QUEEN. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!

O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs! [Noise within.]

KING. The doors are broke.

[Enter LAERTES, armed; DANES following.]

LAERTES. Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without. 95

DANES. No, let's come in.

LAERTES. I pray you, give me leave.

DANES. We will, we will. [They retire without the door.]

LAERTES. I thank you: keep the door. O thou vile king,

Give me my father!

QUEEN. Calmly, good Laertes.

LAERTES. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard; 100

Cries cuckold to my father; brands the harlot

Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brows

Of my true mother.

KING. What is the cause, Laertes,

That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?

Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person: 105

There's such divinity doth hedge a king,

That treason can but peep to what it would,

Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,

Why thou art thus incensed: let him go, Gertrude:

Speak, man. 110

LAERTES. Where is my father?

KING. Dead.

QUEEN. But not by him.

KING. Let him demand his fill.

LAERTES. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:

To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil

Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit! 115

I dare damnation: to this point I stand,

That both the worlds I give to negligence,

Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged

Most thoroughly for my father.

93. counter: following the scent in the wrong direction.

105. fear: fear for.

107. would: desires.

108. his: its.

117. both . . . negligence: I don't care what may happen to me in either this world or the next.

- KING. Who shall stay you?  
 LAERTES. My will, not all the world:  
 And for my means, I'll husband them so well,  
 They shall go far with little. 120
- KING. Good Laertes,  
 If you desire to know the certainty  
 Of your dear father's death, is 't writ in your revenge  
 That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,  
 Winner and loser? 125
- LAERTES. None but his enemies.
- KING. Will you know them then?  
 LAERTES. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;  
 And, like the kind life-rendering pelican,  
 Repast them with my blood.
- KING. Why, now you speak 130  
 Like a good child and a true gentleman.  
 That I am guiltless of your father's death,  
 And am most sensibly in grief for it,  
 It shall as level to your judgment pierce  
 As day does to your eye.
- DANES. [Within] Let her come in. 135
- LAERTES. How now! what noise is that?  
 [Re-enter OPHELIA.]  
 O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,  
 Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!  
 By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,  
 Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May! 140  
 Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!  
 O heavens! is 't possible a young maid's wits  
 Should be as mortal as an old man's life?  
 Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine  
 It sends some precious instance of itself 145  
 After the thing it loves.
- OPHELIA. [Sings] They bore him barefaced on the bier:  
 Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny:  
 And in his grave rain'd many a tear,—  
 Fare you well, my dove! 150
- LAERTES. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,  
 It could not move thus.
- OPHELIA. [Sings] You must sing down a-down,

125. *swoopstake*: without making any distinction, as the winner takes the whole stake in a card game.  
 129. *life-rendering*: The mythical pelican is supposed to feed its young

with its own blood.  
 138. *virtue*: power, faculty.  
 144. *fine*: refined.  
 145. *instance*: sample, token.

An you call him a-down-a.

154

O, how the wheel<sup>d</sup> becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.<sup>e</sup>

LAERTES. This nothing's more than matter.<sup>f</sup>

OPHELIA. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance: pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies,<sup>g</sup> that's for thoughts.

LAERTES. A document<sup>h</sup> in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted.

OPHELIA. There's fennel<sup>i</sup> for you, and columbines:<sup>j</sup> there's rue<sup>k</sup> for you: and here's some for me: we may call it herbs of grace o' Sundays: O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you some violets,<sup>l</sup> but they withered all when my father died: they say he made a good end,—

[Sings] For bonnie sweet Robin is all my joy.

155

LAERTES. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,  
She turns to favor and to prettiness.

OPHELIA. [Sings] And will he not come again?

And will he not come again?

No, no, he is dead,

160

Go to thy death-bed,

He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,

All flaxen was his poll:

He is gone, he is gone,

165

And we cast away moan:

God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' you.

[Exit.]

LAERTES. Do you see this, O God?

KING. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,

170

Or you deny me right. Go but apart,

Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will.

And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:

If by direct or by collateral hand

They find us touched, we will our kingdom give,

175

Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,

To you in satisfaction; but if not,

Be you content to lend your patience to us,

And we shall jointly labor with your soul

d. ballads were often sung to the motion of a spinning wheel.

e. an allusion to an unknown folk ballad.

f. This nonsense is more indicative than sane speech.

g. the symbol of thought.

h. lesson.

i. emblem of flattery.

j. emblem of cuckoldom.

k. emblem of sorrow and repentance (compare the verb "rue").

l. for faithfulness.

157. favor: charm.

174. collateral: indirect.

175. touched: involved (in the murder).

To give it due content.

LAERTES.

Let this be so;

180

His means of death, his obscure funeral,  
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,  
No noble rite nor formal ostentation,  
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
That I must call 't in question.

KING.

So you shall;

185

And where the offense is let the great axe fall.

I pray you, go with me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 6—*Another room in the castle.*

[*Enter HORATIO and a SERVANT.*]

HORATIO. What are they that would speak with me?

SERVANT. Sea-faring men, sir: they say they have letters for you.

HORATIO. Let them come in.

[*Exit SERVANT.*]

I do not know from what part of the world

I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

[*Enter SAILORS.*]

FIRST SAILOR. God bless you, sir.

HORATIO. Let him bless thee too.

FIRST SAILOR. He shall, sir, an 't please him.

There's a letter for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

HORATIO. [*Reads*] 'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked<sup>a</sup> this, give these fellows some means to the king: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valor, and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy:<sup>b</sup> but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore<sup>c</sup> of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

'He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'

Come, I will make you way for these your letters;

And do 't the speedier, that you may direct me

To him from whom you brought them.

[*Exeunt.*]

182. *hatchment*: coat of arms.

b. merciful.

183. *ostentation*: pomp.

c. caliber, i.e., importance.

a. read over.

## SCENE 7—Another room in the castle.

[Enter KING and LAERTES.]

KING. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,  
 And you must put me in your heart for friend,  
 Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,  
 That he which hath your noble father slain  
 Pursued my life.

LAERTES. It well appears: but tell me  
 Why you proceeded not against these feats,  
 So crimeful and so capital in nature,  
 As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,  
 You mainly were stirr'd up.

KING. O, for two special reasons,  
 Which may to you perhaps seem much unsincw'd,  
 But yet to me they're strong. The queen his mother  
 Lives almost by his looks; and for myself—  
 My virtue or my plague, be it either which—  
 She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,  
 That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,  
 I could not but by her. The other motive,  
 Why to a public count I might not go,  
 Is the great love the general gender bear him;  
 Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,  
 Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,  
 Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,  
 Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,  
 Would have reverted to my bow again  
 And not where I had aim'd them.

LAERTES. And so have I a noble father lost;  
 A sister driven into desperate terms,  
 Whose worth, if praises may go back again,  
 Stood challenger on mount of all the age  
 For her perfections: but my revenge will come.

KING. Break not your sleeps for that: you must not think  
 That we are made of stuff so flat and dull  
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger  
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:  
 I loved your father, and we love ourselves;  
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—

[Enter a MESSENGER, with letters.]

6. *feats*: deeds.9. *mainly*: powerfully.10. *unsincw'd*: weak.14. *conjunctive*: closely joined.17. *count*: accounting, trial.18. *general gender*: common people.21. *gyves*: fetters.27. *go back*: i.e., to what she was  
before her madness.28. *on mount of*: above.

How now! what news?

MESSSENGER. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:

This to your majesty; this to the queen.

KING. From Hamlet! who brought them?

MESSSENGER. Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not:

They were given me by Claudio; he received them  
Of him that brought them.

KING. Laertes, you shall hear them. 41

Leave us. [Exit MESSSENGER.]

[Reads] 'High and mighty, you shall know I am set naked on  
your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly  
eyes: when I shall, first asking your pardon<sup>a</sup> thereunto, recount  
the occasion of my sudden and more strange return. HAMLET.'

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back? 42

Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

LAERTES. Know you the hand?

KING. 'Tis Hamlet's character. 'Naked'! 45

And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'

Can you advise me?

LAERTES. I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come;

It warms the very sickness in my heart,  
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,  
'Thus diddest thou.' 50

KING. If it be so, Laertes,—

As how should it be so? how otherwise?—

Will you be ruled by me? 1

LAERTES. Aye, my lord;

So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

KING. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd, 55

As checking at his voyage, and that he means

No more to undertake it, I will work him

To an exploit now ripe in my device,

Under the which he shall not choose but fall:

And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe; 60

But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,

And call it accident.

LAERTES. My lord, I will be ruled;

The rather, if you could devise it so

That I might be the organ.

KING. It falls right.

You have been talk'd of since your travel much, 65

a. leave.

43. *some . . . thing*: a delusion, not  
a reality.

45. *character*: handwriting.

56. *checking at*: changing the course  
of, refusing to continue.

61. *uncharge the practice*: not rec-  
ognize it as a plot.

64. *organ*: instrument.

And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality  
 Wherein, they say, you shine; your sum of parts  
 Did not together pluck such envy from him,  
 As did that one, and that in my regard  
 Of the unworthiest siege.

LAERTES. What part is that, my lord? 70

KING. A very riband in the cap of youth,  
 Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes  
 The light and carless livery that it wears  
 Than settled age his sables and his weeds,  
 Importing health and graveness. Two months since 75  
 Here was a gentleman of Normandy:—  
 I've seen myself, and served against, the French,  
 And they can well on horseback: but this gallant  
 Had witchcraft in 't; he grew unto his seat,  
 And to such wondrous doing brought this horse 80  
 As had he been incorpsed and demi-natured  
 With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought  
 That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,  
 Come short of what he did.

LAERTES. A Norman was 't?

KING. A Norman. 85

LAERTES. Upon my life, Lamord.

KING. The very same.

LAERTES. I know him well: he is the brooch indeed  
 And gem of all the nation.

KING. He made confession of you,  
 And gave you such a masterly report, 90  
 For art and exercise in your defense,  
 And for your rapier most especial,  
 That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed  
 If one could match you: the scrimers of their nation,  
 He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye, 95  
 If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his  
 Did Hamlet so unvenom with his envy  
 That he could nothing do but wish and beg  
 Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.  
 Now, out of this—

LAERTES. What out of this, my lord? 100

67. *your sum of parts*: the sum of your gifts.

70. *siege*: seat, i.e., rank.

71. *riband*: ribbon, ornament.

72. *becomes*: is the appropriate age for.

74. *sables*: blacks, also furs. *weeds*: robes.

81. *incorpsed*: incorporated. *demi-*

*natured*: split his nature in two.

83. *in forgery . . . tricks*: in imaging methods and skills of horsemanship.

87. *brooch*: ornament.

90-91. *masterly . . . defense*: report of your mastery in the theory and practice of fencing.

94. *scrimers*: fencers.



KING. Laertes, was your father dear to you?

Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,  
A face without a heart?

LAERTES. Why ask you this?

KING. Not that I think you did not love your father,

But that I know love is begun by time, 105

And that I see, in passages of proof,

Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.

There lives within the very flame of love

A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it;

And nothing is at a like goodness still, 110

For goodness, growing to a plurisy,

Dies in his own too much: that we would do

We should do when we would; for this 'would' changes

And hath abatements and delays as many

As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents, 115

And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,

That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the ulcer:

Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake,

To show yourself your father's son in deed

More than in words?

LAERTES. To cut his throat i' the church. 120

KING. No place indeed should murder sanctuarize;

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,

Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.

Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:

We'll put on those shall praise your excellence 125

And set a double varnish on the fame

The Frenchman gave you; bring you in fine together

And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,

Most generous and free from all contriving,

Will not peruse the foils, so that with ease, 130

Or with a little shuffling, you may choose

A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice

Requite him for your father.

LAERTES. I will do 't;

And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.

I bought an unction of a mountebank, 135

106. *passages of proof*: instances which prove it.

107. *qualifies*: weakens.

109. *snuff*: charred part of the wick.

110. *still*: constantly.

111. *plurisy*: excess of blood.

116-117. *sigh . . . easing*: a sigh which gives relief but is harmful (according to an old notion that it draws blood from the heart).

125. *put on*: instigate.

127. *in fine*: finally.

128. *remiss*: careless.

130. *peruse*: examine closely.

132. *unbated*: not blunted (as a rapier for exercise ordinarily would be).

*pass of practice*: treacherous thrust.

135. *unction*: ointment. *mountebank*:

peddler of quack medicines.

So mortal that but dip a knife in it,  
 Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,  
 Collected from all simples that have virtue  
 Under the moon, can save the thing from death  
 That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point  
 With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,  
 It may be death. 140

KING. Let's further think of this;  
 Weigh what convenience both of time and means  
 May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,  
 And that our drift look through our bad performance, 145  
 'Twere better not assay'd: therefore this project  
 Should have a back or second, that might hold  
 If this did blast in proof. Soft! let me see:  
 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings:  
 I ha' 't: 150  
 When in your motion you are hot and dry—  
 As make your bouts more violent to that end—  
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him  
 A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,  
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck, 155  
 Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?  
 [Enter QUEEN.]

How now, sweet queen!

QUEEN. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,  
 So fast they follow: your sister's drown'd, Laertes.  
 LAERTES. Drown'd! O, where? 160

QUEEN. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,  
 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;  
 There with fantastic garlands did she come  
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,  
 That liberal shepherds give a grosser name, 165  
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:  
 There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds  
 Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;  
 When down her weedy trophies and herself  
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide, 170  
 And mermaid-like a while they bore her up:  
 Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,  
 As one incapable of her own distress,

137. *cataplasm*: plaster.

138. *simples*: healing herbs.

141. *gall*: scratch.

144. *shape*: plan.

145. *our . . . through*: our design  
 should show through.

148. *blast in proof*: burst (like a

new firearm) once it is put to the test.

154. *for the nonce*: for that particular occasion.

155 *stuck*. thrust.

161. *aslant*: across.

168. *envious sliver*: malicious bough.

173. *incapable*: insensitive to.

Or like a creature native and indued  
Unto that element: but long it could not be  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death. 175

LAERTES. Alas, then she is drown'd!

QUEEN. Drown'd, drown'd.

LAERTES. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
And therefore I forbid my tears: but yet  
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,  
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,  
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord:  
I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze,  
But that this folly douts it. 185  
[Exit.]

KING. Let's follow, Gertrude:

How much I had to do to calm his rage!

Now fear I this will give it start again;

Therefore let's follow. [Exeunt.]

## Act V

### SCENE 1—A churchyard.

[Enter two CLOWNS, with spades, &c.]

FIRST CLOWN. Is she to be buried in Christian burial that willfully seeks her own salvation?

SECOND CLOWN. I tell thee she is; and therefore make her grave straight:<sup>a</sup> the crowner<sup>b</sup> hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

FIRST CLOWN. How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?

SECOND CLOWN. Why, 'tis found so.

FIRST CLOWN. It must be 'sc offendendo;<sup>c</sup> it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, to perform: argal,<sup>d</sup> she drowned herself wittingly.

SECOND CLOWN. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver.

FIRST CLOWN. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he,<sup>e</sup> he goes; mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

174. *indued*: adapted, in harmony with.

182. *trick*: peculiar trait.

184. *The woman*: the softer qualities, the woman in me.

186. *douts*: extinguishes.

a. straightway.

b. coroner.

c. the Clown's blunder for *se defendendo*, "in self-defense."

d. blunder for *ergo*, "therefore."

e. willy-nilly.

SECOND CLOWN. But is this law?

FIRST CLOWN. Aye, marry, is 't; crowner's quest' law.

SECOND CLOWN. Will you ha' the truth on 't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

FIRST CLOWN. Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance<sup>o</sup> in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian.<sup>h</sup> Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

SECOND CLOWN. Was he a gentleman?

FIRST CLOWN. A' was the first that ever bore arms.

SECOND CLOWN. Why, he had none.

FIRST CLOWN. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged: could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

SECOND CLOWN. Go to.

FIRST CLOWN. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

SECOND CLOWN. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

FIRST CLOWN. I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come.

SECOND CLOWN. 'Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?'

FIRST CLOWN. Aye, tell me that, and unyoke.<sup>4</sup>

SECOND CLOWN. Marry, now I can tell.

FIRST CLOWN. To 't.

SECOND CLOWN. Mass, I cannot tell.

[Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, *afar off*.]

FIRST CLOWN. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating, and when you are asked this question next, say 'a grave-maker:' the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan,<sup>j</sup> fetch me a stoup<sup>k</sup> of liquor.

[Exit SECOND CLOWN. —FIRST CLOWN *digs and sings*.]

In youth, when I did love, did love,

Methought it was very sweet,

To contract,<sup>l</sup> O, the time, for-a my behove,<sup>m</sup>

<sup>j</sup>. inquest.

<sup>g</sup>. sanction.

<sup>h</sup>. fellow Christian.

<sup>i</sup>. call it a day.

<sup>j</sup>. apparently a tavern-keeper's name.

<sup>k</sup>. mug.

<sup>l</sup>. shorten.

<sup>m</sup>. profit.

O, methought, there-a was nothing-a meet.\*

HAMLET. Has this fellow no feeling of his business that he sings at grave-making?

HORATIO. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.\*

HAMLET. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment<sup>o</sup> hath the daintier<sup>q</sup> sense.

FIRST CLOWN. [Sings] But age, with his stealing steps,  
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,  
And hath shipped me intil<sup>r</sup> the land,  
As if I had never been such.

[Throws up a skull.]

HAMLET. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: how the knave jowls<sup>s</sup> it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder!<sup>t</sup> It might be the pate of a politician,\* which this ass now o'er-reaches;<sup>v</sup> one that would circumvent God, might it not?

HORATIO. It might, my lord.

HAMLET. Or of a courtier, which could say, 'Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, sweet lord?' This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

HORATIO. Aye, my lord.

HAMLET. Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's; chapless,\* and knocked about the mazzard<sup>x</sup> with a sexton's spade: here's fine revolution, an we had the trick<sup>y</sup> to see 't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats<sup>z</sup> with 'em? mine ache to think on 't.

FIRST CLOWN. [Sings] A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,  
For a shrouding sheet:  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

[Throws up another skull.]

HAMLET. There's another: why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities<sup>a</sup> now, his quilllets,<sup>b</sup> his cases, his tenures,\* and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce<sup>c</sup> with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery?<sup>d</sup> Hum! This fellow might be in 's time

m. fitting.  
o. has made it a matter of indifference to him.

p. which does little labor.

q. finer sensitivity.

r. into.

s. knocks.

t. possibly an allusion to the legend according to which Cain slew Abel with an ass's jawbone.

u. the word has a pejorative sense.

v. outwits.

w. her lower jawbone missing.

x. pate.

y. faculty.

z. a game resembling bowls.

a. subtle definitions.

b. quibbles.

c. real-estate holdings.

d. head.

e. assault.

a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances,<sup>f</sup> his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries:<sup>g</sup> is this the fine<sup>h</sup> of his fines and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures?<sup>i</sup> The very conveyances<sup>j</sup> of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

HORATIO. Not a jot more, my lord.

HAMLET. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

HORATIO. Aye, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

HAMLET. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance<sup>k</sup> in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

FIRST CLOWN. Mine, sir.

[Sings] O, a pit of clay for to be made

For such a guest is meet.

HAMLET. I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in 't.

FIRST CLOWN. You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours: for my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet it is mine.

HAMLET. Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick;<sup>l</sup> therefore thou liest.

FIRST CLOWN. 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

HAMLET. What man dost thou dig it for?

FIRST CLOWN. For no man, sir.

HAMLET. What woman then?

FIRST CLOWN. For none neither.

HAMLET. Who is to be buried in 't?

FIRST CLOWN. One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she 's dead.

HAMLET. How absolute<sup>m</sup> the knave is! we must speak by the card,<sup>n</sup> or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked<sup>o</sup> that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.<sup>p</sup> How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

FIRST CLOWN. Of all the days i' the year, I came to 't that day that our last King Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras.

HAMLET. How long is that since?

FIRST CLOWN. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it was

f. statutes . . . recognizances: varieties of bonds.

g. his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: legal terms relating to the transference of estates.

h. end. Hamlet is punning on the legal and nonlegal meanings of the word. Similarly the other terms are played with in the following lines.

i. contracts drawn in duplicate on the same piece of parchment, the two copies

separated by an "indented" line.

j. deeds.

k. security; another pun, since the word is also a legal term.

l. living.

m. positive.

n. by the chart, i.e., with exactness.

o. choice, fastidious.

p. hurts the chilblain on the courtier's heel.

that very day that young Hamlet was born: he that is mad, and sent into England.

HAMLET. Aye, marry, why was he sent into England?

FIRST CLOWN. Why, because a' was mad; a' shall recover his wits there: or, if a' do not, 'tis no great matter there.

HAMLET. Why?

FIRST CLOWN. 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

HAMLET. How came he mad?

FIRST CLOWN. Very strangely, they say.

HAMLET. How 'strangely'?

FIRST CLOWN. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

HAMLET. Upon what ground?

FIRST CLOWN. Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

HAMLET. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

FIRST CLOWN. I' faith, if a' be not rotten before a' dic—as we have many pocky<sup>q</sup> corses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in<sup>r</sup>—a' will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

HAMLET. Why he more than another?

FIRST CLOWN. Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that a' will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now: this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

HAMLET. Whose was it?

FIRST CLOWN. A whoreson mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

HAMLET. Nay, I know not.

FIRST CLOWN. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a flagon of Rhenish<sup>s</sup> on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

HAMLET. This?

FIRST CLOWN. E'en that.

HAMLET. Let me see. [*Takes the skull.*] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chop-fallen?<sup>t</sup> Now get you to my lady's

<sup>q</sup>. with marks of disease (from "pox").

<sup>r</sup>. hold together till they are buried.

<sup>s</sup>. Rhine wine.

<sup>t</sup>. the lower jaw fallen down; hence, dejected.

chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor<sup>u</sup> she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HORATIO. What's that, my lord?

HAMLET. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

HORATIO. E'en so.

HAMLET. And smelt so? pah! [Puts down the skull.]

HORATIO. E'en so, my lord.

HAMLET. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

HORATIO. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

HAMLET. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough<sup>v</sup> and likelihood to lead it: as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay, 1

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,

Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king. 5

[Enter PRIESTS &c, in procession; the Corpse of Ophelia, LAERTES and MOURNERS following; KING, QUEEN, their trains, &c.]

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?

And with such maimèd rites? This doth betoken

The corse they follow did with desperate hand

Fordo its own life: 'twas of some estate.

Couch we awhile, and mark. 10

[Retiring with HORATIO.]

LAERTES. What ceremony else?

HAMLET. That is Laertes, a very noble youth: mark.

LAERTES. What ceremony else?

FIRST PRIEST. Her obsequies have been as far enlarged

As we have warranty: her death was doubtful; 15

And, but that great command o'ersways the order

She should in ground unsanctified have lodged

Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,

<sup>u</sup>. appearance.

<sup>v</sup>. without exaggeration.

7. *maimèd rites*: incomplete, mutilated ritual.

9. *Fordo*: destroy. *estate*: rank.

15. *warranty*: warrant, permission.

*doubtful*: of uncertain cause (i.e., accident or suicide).

16. *great . . . order*: the king's command prevails against ordinary rules.

18. *for*: instead of.



Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her:  
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,  
Her maiden strewments and the bringing home  
Of bell and burial. 20

LAERTES. Must there no more be done?

FIRST PRIEST. No more be done:  
We should profane the service of the dead  
To sing a requiem and such rest to her  
As to peace-parted souls. 25

LAERTES. Lay her i' the earth:  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A ministering angel shall my sister be,  
When thou liest howling.

HAMLET. What, the fair Ophelia! 30  
QUEEN. [*Scattering flowers*] Sweets to the sweet: farewell!  
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;  
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
And not have strew'd thy grave.

LAERTES. O, treble woe  
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head  
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth a while,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.  
[*Leaps into the grave.*]  
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made  
To o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus. 35 40

HAMLET. [*Advancing*] What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow  
Conjures the wandering stars and makes them stand  
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,  
Hamlet the Dane. [*Leaps into the grave.*]

LAERTES. The devil take thy soul! [*Grappling with him.*]

HAMLET. Thou pray'st not well.  
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;  
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,  
Yet have I in me something dangerous,  
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand. 50

KING. Pluck them asunder.

20. *crants*: garland.

21. *strewments*: strewing of flowers.  
home: the grave.

41. *Pelion*: the mountain upon which

the Aloadae, two rebellious giants in  
Greek mythology, piled Mount Ossa in  
their attempt to reach Olympus.

50. *splenitive*: easily moved to anger.

QUEEN.

Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL.

Gentlemen,—

HORATIO. Good my lord, be quiet.

[The ATTENDANTS part them, and they come out of the grave.]

HAMLET. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme

55

Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

QUEEN. O my son, what theme?

HAMLET. I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers

Could not, with all their quantity of love,

Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

60

KING. O, he is mad, Laertes.

QUEEN. For love of God, forbear him.

HAMLET. 'Swounds, show me what thou 'lt do:

Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?

Woo't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?

65

I'll do't. Dost thou come herc to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw

Millions of acres on us, till our ground,

70

Singeing his pate against the burning zone,

Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou 'lt mouth,

I'll rant as well as thou.

QUEEN.

This is mere madness:

And thus a while the fit will work on him;

Anon, as patient as the female dove

75

When that her golden couplets are disclosed,

His silence will sit drooping.

HAMLET.

Hear you, sir;

What is the reason that you use me thus?

I loved you ever: but it is no matter;

Let Hercules himself do what he may,

80

The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.

[Exit.]

KING. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.

[Exit HORATIO.]

[To LAERTES] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;

We'll put the matter to the present push.

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.

85

This grave shall have a living monument:

An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;

Till then, in patience our proceeding be.

[Exeunt.]

64. *Woo't*: wilt.65. *eisel*: vinegar (the bitter drink given to Christ).76. *couplets*: twins. *disclosed*: hatched.84. *We'll put . . . push*: We will push the matter on immediately.

SCENE 2—A hall in the castle.

[Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.]

HAMLET. So much for this, sir: now shall you see the other;  
You do remember all the circumstance?

HORATIO. Remember it, my lord?

HAMLET. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,  
That would not let me sleep: methought I lay  
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,  
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometime serves us well  
When our deep plots do pall; and that should learn us  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will.

HORATIO. That is most certain.

HAMLET. Up from my cabin,  
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark  
Groped I to find out them; had my desire,  
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew  
To mine own room again; making so bold,  
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal  
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,—  
O royal knavery!—an exact command,  
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,  
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,  
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,  
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,  
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,  
My head should be struck off.

HORATIO. Is't possible? 25

HAMLET. Here's the commission: read it at more leisure.

But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

HORATIO. I beseech you.

HAMLET. Being thus be-netted round with villainies,—  
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,  
They had begun the play,—I sat me down;  
Devised a new commission; wrote it fair:  
I once did hold it, as our statists do,  
A baseness to write fair, and labor'd much  
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now  
It did me yeoman's service: wilt thou know

6. *mutines in the bilboes*: mutineers  
in iron fetters.

9. *pall*: become useless.

21. *Importing*: concerning.

22. *bugs*: bugbears.

23. *on the supervise . . . bated*: as soon as the message was read, with no time subtracted for leisure.

33. *statists*: statesmen.

36. *yeoman's service*: excellent service.

The effect of what I wrote?

HORATIO.

Aye, good my lord.

HAMLET. An earnest conjuration from the king,

As England was his faithful tributary,

As love between them like the palm might flourish,

40

As peace should still her wheaten garland wear

And stand a comma 'tween their amities,

And many such-like 'As'es of great charge,

That, on the view and knowing of these contents,

Without debatement further, more or less,

45

He should the bearers put to sudden death,

Not shriving-time allow'd.

HORATIO.

How was this seal'd?

HAMLET. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.

I had my father's signet in my purse,

Which was the model of that Danish seal:

50

Folded the writ up in the form of the other;

Subscribed it; gave 't the impression; placed it safely,

The changeling never known. Now, the next day

Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent

Thou know'st already.

55

HORATIO. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to 't.

HAMLET. Why, man, they did make love to this employment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat

Does by their own insinuation grow:

'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes

60

Between the pass and fell-incensèd points

Of mighty opposites.

HORATIO.

Why, what a king is this!

HAMLET. Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon—

He that hath kill'd my king, and whored my mother;

Popp'd in between the election and my hopes;

65

Thrown out his angle for my proper life,

And with such cozenage—is't not perfect conscience,

To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,

To let this canker of our nature come

In further evil?

70

HORATIO. It must be shortly known to him from England

42. *comma*: connecting element.

43. 'As'es: a pun on "as" and "ass," which extends to the following *of great charge*, signifying both "moral weight," and "ass's burden."

47. *shriving-time*: time for confession and absolution.

48. *ordinant*: ordaining.

52. *impression*: of the seal.

58. *defeat*: destruction.

59. *insinuation*: meddling.

60. *baser*: lower in rank than the King and Prince Hamlet.

61. *pass*: thrust. *fell*: fiercely.

63. *Does it not . . . stand me now upon*: is it not my duty now?

66. *angle*: angling line. *my proper*: my own.

67. *cozenage*: deceit.

68. *quit*: requite.

69. *canker*: corroding ulcer.

What is the issue of the business there.

**HAMLET.** It will be short: the interim is mine;  
And a man's life's no more than to say 'One.'  
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,  
That to Laertes I forgot myself;  
For, by the image of my cause, I see  
The portraiture of his: I'll court his favors:  
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me  
Into a towering passion.

75

**HORATIO.** Peace! who comes here?

80

[Enter OSRIC.]

**OSRIC.** Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

**HAMLET.** I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this waterfly?

**HORATIO.** No, my good lord.

**HAMLET.** Thy state is the more gracious, for 'tis a vice to know him.  
He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts,  
and his crib shall stand at the king's mess:<sup>a</sup> 'tis a cough,<sup>b</sup> but,  
as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

**OSRIC.** Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart  
a thing to you from his majesty.

**HAMLET.** I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your  
bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

**OSRIC.** I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

**HAMLET.** No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

**OSRIC.** It is indifferent<sup>c</sup> cold, my lord, indeed.

**HAMLET.** But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot, or my complexion—

**OSRIC.** Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, as 'twere,—I cannot  
tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that  
he has laid a great wager on your head: sir, this is the matter—

**HAMLET.** I beseech you, remember—

[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.]

**OSRIC.** Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is  
newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman,  
full of most excellent differences,<sup>d</sup> of very soft society and great  
showing:<sup>e</sup> indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or  
calendar of gentry,<sup>f</sup> for you shall find in him the continent of<sup>g</sup>  
what part<sup>h</sup> a gentleman would see.

**HAMLET.** Sir, his definement<sup>i</sup> suffers no perdition<sup>j</sup> in you; though,  
I know, to divide him inventorially<sup>k</sup> would dizzy the arithmetic<sup>l</sup>

79. *bravery*: ostentation, bravado.

a. table.

b. jackdaw.

c. fairly.

d. distinctions.

e. agreeable company, and handsome  
in appearance.

f. chart and model of gentlemanly  
manners.

g. container.

h. whatever quality.

i. definition.

j. loss.

k. make an inventory of his virtues.

l. arithmetical power.

of memory, and yet but yaw neither,<sup>m</sup> in respect of his quick sail. But in the verity of extolment,<sup>n</sup> I take him to be a soul of great article,<sup>o</sup> and his infusion<sup>p</sup> of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace<sup>q</sup> him, his umbrage,<sup>r</sup> nothing more.

OSRIC. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

HAMLET. The concernancy,<sup>s</sup> sir? why do we wrap the gentleman<sup>t</sup> in our more rawer breath?

OSRIC. Sir?

HORATIO. Is 't not possible to understand in another tongue?<sup>u</sup> You will do 't, sir, really.

HAMLET. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSRIC. Of Laertes?

HORATIO. His purse is empty already; all's golden words are spent.

HAMLET. Of him, sir.

OSRIC. I know you are not ignorant—

HAMLET. I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me.<sup>v</sup> Well, sir?

OSRIC. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

HAMLET. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.<sup>w</sup>

OSRIC. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.<sup>x</sup>

HAMLET. What's his weapon?

OSRIC. Rapier and dagger.

HAMLET. That's two of his weapons: but, well.

OSRIC. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has imponed,<sup>y</sup> as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns,<sup>z</sup> as girdle, hanger, and so: three of the carriages,<sup>a</sup> in faith, are very dear to fancy,<sup>b</sup> very responsive<sup>c</sup> to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.<sup>d</sup>

HAMLET. What call you the carriages?

HORATIO. I knew you must be edified by the margent<sup>e</sup> ere you had done.

<sup>m</sup>. and yet would only be able to steer unsteadily (unable to catch up with the "sail" of Laertes' virtues).

<sup>n</sup>. to praise Laertes truthfully.

<sup>o</sup>. importance.

<sup>p</sup>. the virtues infused into him.

<sup>q</sup>. keep pace with.

<sup>r</sup>. shadow.

<sup>s</sup>. purport.

<sup>t</sup>. Laertes.

<sup>u</sup>. in a less affected jargon; or, in the same jargon when spoken by another (i.e., Hamlet's) tongue.

<sup>v</sup>. be to my credit.

<sup>w</sup>. to know others one has to know oneself.

<sup>x</sup>. in the reputation given him by his weapons, his merit is unparalleled.

<sup>y</sup>. wagered.

<sup>z</sup>. appendages.

<sup>a</sup>. ornamented straps by which the rapiers hung from the belt.

<sup>b</sup>. agreeable to the taste.

<sup>c</sup>. corresponding, closely matched.

<sup>d</sup>. elegant design.

<sup>e</sup>. instructed by the marginal note.

OSRIC. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

HAMLET. The phrase would be more germane to the matter if we could carry a cannon by our sides:<sup>f</sup> I would it might be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed,' as you call it?

OSRIC. The king, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.<sup>g</sup>

HAMLET. How if I answer 'no'?

OSRIC. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

HAMLET. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, it is the breathing time<sup>h</sup> of day with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

OSRIC. Shall I redeliver you e'en so?<sup>i</sup>

HAMLET. To this effect, sir, after what flourish your nature will.

OSRIC. I commend my duty to your lordship.

HAMLET. Yours, yours. [Exit OSRIC.] He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

HORATIO. This lapwing<sup>j</sup> runs away with the shell on his head.

HAMLET. He did comply<sup>k</sup> with his dug before he sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy<sup>l</sup> age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty<sup>m</sup> collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions;<sup>n</sup> and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

[Enter a LORD.]

LORD. My lord, his majesty commended him<sup>o</sup> to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

HAMLET. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoe'er, provided I be so able as now.

f. Hamlet is playfully criticizing Osric's affected application of the term "carriage," more properly used to mean "gun carriage."

g. "The passage is of no importance; it is sufficient that there was a wager." [Samuel Johnson.]

h. time for exercise.

i. Is that the reply you want me to

carry back?

j. a bird supposedly able to run as soon as it is out of its shell.

k. use ceremony.

l. degenerate.

m. foamy.

n. makes them pass the test of the most refined judgment.

o. sent his regards.

LORD. The king and queen and all are coming down.

HAMLET. In happy time.

LORD. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment<sup>p</sup> to Laertes before you fall to play.

HAMLET. She well instructs me.

[Exit LORD.]

HORATIO. You will lose this wager, my lord.

HAMLET. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

HORATIO. Nay, good my lord,—

HAMLET. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gaingiving<sup>q</sup> as would perhaps trouble a woman.

HORATIO. If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will forestall their repair<sup>r</sup> hither, and say you are not fit.

HAMLET. Not a whit; we defy augury: there is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all; since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?<sup>s</sup> Let be.

[Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, and LORDS, OSRIC and other ATTENDANTS with foils and gauntlets; a table and flagons of wine on it.]

KING. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[The KING puts LAERTES' hand into HAMLET'S.]

HAMLET. Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong; 81  
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows,

And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd

With sore distraction. What I have done, 85

That might your nature, honor and exception

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes, 90

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it then? His madness: if't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience, 95

Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

p. kind word of greeting.

q. misgiving.

r. coming.

s. what is wrong with dying early

(leaving "betimes") since man knows nothing of life ("what he leaves")?

83. presence: audience.

86. exception: objection.



That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,  
And hurt my brother.

LAERTES. I am satisfied in nature,  
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most 100  
To my revenge: but in my terms of honor  
I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation,  
Till by some elder masters of known honor  
I have a voice and precedent of peace,  
To keep my name ungored. But till that time 105  
I do receive your offer'd love like love  
And will not wrong it.

HAMLET. I embrace it freely,  
And will this brother's wager frankly play.  
Give us the foils. Come on.

LAERTES. Come, one for me.

HAMLET. I'll be your foil, Laertes: in mine ignorance 110  
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,  
Stick fiery off indeed.

LAERTES. You mock me, sir.

HAMLET. No, by this hand.

KING. Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,  
You know the wager?

HAMLET. Very well, my lord; 115  
Your grace has laid the odds o' the weaker side.

KING. I do not fear it; I have seen you both:

But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

LAERTES. This is too heavy; let me see another.

HAMLET. This likes me well. These foils have all a length? 120

[*They prepare to play.*]

OSRIC. Aye, my good lord.

KING. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,

Or quit in answer of the third exchange,

Let all the battlements their ordnance fire; 125

The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;

And in the cup an union shall he throw,

Richer than that which four successive kings

99-101. *in nature* . . . *honor*: Laertes answers separately each of the two points brought up by Hamlet in l. 86; "nature" is Laertes' natural feeling toward his father, and "honor" the code of honor with its conventional rules.

104. *voice and precedent*: competent opinion based on precedent.

105. *ungored*: unwounded.

110. *foil*: a pun, since the word means both "rapier" and "a thing which sets off another to advantage" (as gold leaf under a jewel).

112. *Stick fiery off*: stand out brilliantly.

122. *stoups*: cups.

124. *quit*: requite, repay (by scoring a hit). *exchange*: bout.

127. *union*: a large pearl.

In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;  
 And let the kettle to the trumpet speak, 130  
 The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
 The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,  
 'Now the king drinks to Hamlet.' Come, begin;  
 And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

HAMLET. Come on, sir.

LAERTES. Come, my lord. [*They play.*]

HAMLET. One.

LAERTES. No.

HAMLET. Judgment.

OSRIC. A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES. Well; again. 136

KING. Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;  
 Here's to thy health.

[*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.*]  
 Give him the cup.

HAMLET. I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.

Come. [*They play.*] Another hit; what say you? 140

LAERTES. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

KING. Our son shall win.

QUEEN. He's fat and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

HAMLET. Good madam!

KING. Gertrude, do not drink. 145

QUEEN. I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.

KING. [*Aside*] It is the poison'd cup; it is too late.

QUEEN. Come, let me wipe thy face.

LAERTES. My lord, I'll hit him now.

KING. I do not think't.

LAERTES. [*Aside*] And yet it is almost against my conscience. 150

HAMLET. Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;

I pray you, pass with your best violence;

I am afraid you make a wanton of me.

LAERTES. Say you so? come on. [*They play.*]

OSRIC. Nothing, neither way. 155

LAERTES. Have at you now!

[*LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES.*]

KING. Part them; they are incensed.

HAMLET. Nay, come, again. [*The QUEEN falls.*]

130. *kettle*: kettledrum.

142. *fat*: sweaty; or, soft, because  
 out of training. *scant*: short.

143. *napkin*: handkerchief.

153. *wanton*: weakling, spoiled child.

OSRIC. Look to the queen there, ho!  
 HORATIO. They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?  
 OSRIC. How is't, Laertes?  
 LAERTES. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric; 160  
 I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.  
 HAMLET. How does the queen?  
 KING. She swoonds to see them bleed.  
 QUEEN. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet,—  
 The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. [Dies.]  
 HAMLET. O villainy! Ho! let the door be lock'd: 165  
 Treachery! seek it out. [LAERTES falls.]  
 LAERTES. It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;  
 No medicine in the world can do thee good,  
 In thee there is not half an hour of life;  
 The treacherous instrument is in thy hand, 170  
 Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practice  
 Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,  
 Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:  
 I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.  
 HAMLET. The point envenom'd too! 175  
 Then, venom, to thy work. [Stabs the KING.]  
 ALL. Treason! treason!  
 KING. O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.  
 HAMLET. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,  
 Drink off this potion: is thy union here? 180  
 Follow my mother. [KING dies.]  
 LAERTES. He is justly served;  
 It is a poison temper'd by himself.  
 Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:  
 Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,  
 Nor thine on me! 185  
 [Dies.]  
 HAMLET. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.  
 I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!  
 You that look pale and tremble at this chance,  
 That are but mutes or audience to this act,  
 Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, death, 190  
 Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—  
 But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;  
 Thou livest; report me and my cause aright  
 To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO. Never believe it:  
 I am more an antique Roman than a Dane: 195

160. *springe*: snare.

1. 132. *practice*: plot.

171. *Unbated*: See Act IV, Scene 7,

182. *temper'd*: compounded.

Here's yet some liquor left.

HAMLET. As thou'rt a man,  
Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have 't.  
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,  
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!  
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,  
Absent thee from felicity a while,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
To tell my story. *[March afar off, and shot within.]*

200

What warlike noise is this?

OSRIC. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,  
To the ambassadors of England gives  
This warlike volley.

205

HAMLET. O, I die, Horatio;  
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:  
I cannot live to hear the news from England;  
But I do prophesy the election lights  
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;  
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,  
Which have solicited. The rest is silence. *[Dies.]*

210

HORATIO. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest; *[March within.]*  
Why does the drum come hither?  
*[Enter FORTINBRAS, and the ENGLISH AMBASSADORS, with  
drum, colors, and ATTENDANTS.]*

215

FORTINBRAS. Where is this sight?

HORATIO. What is it you would see?  
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

FORTINBRAS. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,  
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,  
That thou so many princes at a shot  
So bloodily hast struck?

220

FIRST AMBASSADOR. The sight is dismal;  
And our affairs from England come too late:  
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,  
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,  
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:  
Where should we have our thanks?

225

HORATIO. Not from his mouth  
Had it the ability of life to thank you:  
He never gave commandment for their death.

207. *o'er-crows*: overcomes.

211. *occurrents*: occurrences.

212. *Which have solicited*: which  
have brought about all this.

218. *This . . . havoc*: This heap of  
corpses proclaims a carnage.

219. *toward*: imminent.

But since, so jump upon this bloody question,  
 You from the Polack wars, and you from England 230  
 Are here arrived, give order that these bodies  
 High on a stage be placed to the view;  
 And let me speak to the yet unknowing world  
 How these things came about: so shall you hear  
 Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts, 235  
 Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,  
 Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,  
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook  
 Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I  
 Truly deliver.

FORTINBRAS. Let us haste to hear it, 240  
 And call the noblest to the audience.  
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune:  
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,  
 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

HORATIO. Of that I shall have also cause to speak, 245  
 And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:  
 But let this same be presently perform'd,  
 Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance  
 On plots and errors happen.

FORTINBRAS. Let four captains 250  
 Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;  
 For he was likely, had he been put on,  
 To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,  
 The soldiers' music and the rites of war  
 Speak loudly for him.  
 Take up the bodies: such a sight as this 255  
 Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.  
 Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the bodies: after which  
 a peal of ordnance is shot off.]

229. *so jump upon*: so immediately upon.

236. *casual*: chance.

237. *put on*: prompted.

243. *of memory*: still remembered.

244. *vantage*: advantageous position, opportunity.

246. *more*: more voices.

249. *On*: following on.

251. *put on*: tried (as king).

252. *passage*: death.

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